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THE LESBIAN TIDE

A FEMINIST LESBIAN PUBLICATION, WRITTEN BY AND FOR THE RISING TIDE OF WOMEN TODAY

Lesbian Brothel!

Women, Land and Power

Inside the "Daddy Tank" Prison

Sado-Masochism; More Than Whips and Chains



Michigan Music Festival

NOV./DEC. 1976 50¢ in L.A. 75¢ Elsewhere

Lesbian Tide

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Cover photo by EK Waller.

EDITORIAL POLICY

In the interest of fostering open communication and progressive theoretical development, *The Lesbian Tide* prints a wide variety of views from the lesbian, feminist, and gay communities. Our editorial perspective also includes coverage of other social change movements as they relate to women.

The Tide Collective, radical feminist lesbians who believe basic change in our society is pre-requisite to real liberation for women and lesbians, publishes editorials stating our views and analysis on particular issues.

Profile: Arlene Raven, "Oppression Is No Virtue"



Photo by EK Waller

by Shirl Buss

Women have often expressed yearnings to have *The Lesbian Tide* delivered to their doorstep each day. Others have said they crave to hear feminist musicians on every jukebox and car radio. Still others have savored fantasies of having "A Comedy in Six Unnatural Acts" serialized as a weekly TV sitcom.

It is women like Arlene Raven who propel such fantasies into fact, and who inspire and reignite the powers in other women to work toward this goal. It is women like Arlene Raven who push to turn the tiny inroads made by women's culture into aggressive assaults on the ruling culture.

As a feminist art historian, Raven functions more as a political theoretician than a traditional art critic. She is an interpreter of visual art forms. But her aim is to use art to initiate dialogues and make violent impacts on society.

As one of the founders of the Woman's Building, the Feminist Studio Workshop and the Center for Feminist Art Historical Studies, Raven's experiences as a cultural worker have given her important information to share with other women. "I've seen a great deal of self and group deprecation in alternate institutions. Women see themselves as underdogs, even within the movement. We have internalized so much oppression and there are so many things defeating us

that we begin defeating ourselves. It is imperative for each woman to give her best back to feminist institutions, groups, and publications. We often do our best work for regular institutions and leave our worst work for our own institutions. I'm convinced that as I become more powerful in my point of view, and as other women become more powerful in their point of view, we'll be in control of more power in our structures . . . that means financial resources, language, institutions and the direction of the future."

Raven sees this metamorphosis as a difficult one to make. The J. Paul Getty's of the world don't have to worry about us. The social structure of this culture is such that those in power can stand by while we, without participation in that culture, beat each other to death. The silence of our omission from the culture encourages us to become false adversaries. We release our rage where it will be heard and responded to . . . with other women."

Because women have internalized this oppression so thoroughly, the challenges to be met by feminist institutions are even greater. "The Woman's Building was never set up to be a tit. But women's needs were great, and so a tremendous amount of frustration and anger has been directed there. We must find ways to provide for this need and hunger in women when we create feminist structures."

Raven believes that feminist education can dramatically change women's lives. As a lecturer, she has been instrumental in "spreading the word" and planting seeds for feminist education programs across the nation. "Feminist education can change a woman's self-image from that of victim to that of a powerful individual who can operate in the world. This includes being able to foresee and deal with opposition. I don't mean getting into the mainstream and getting your piece of the pie. I'm talking about having a certain kind of inner resource and group resource so we can build up strength and deal with those systems. Right now we don't participate in mainstream systems and we have no knowledge of them. We need to get that knowledge and we need to be able to use it in our own systems, so we can deal with opposition from a position of strength."

DEFYING PARTY LINES

True to her distinctive brand of radical feminism, Raven resists party lines and extrapolates concepts from est she feels can be useful for women. "You must understand that there is a certain area of control that you have in your own life, not regardless of, but in addition to all of the forces that are working on you from the outside. In that area of control that you have, it is up to you to choose your attitude about it and be able to act upon your situation."

She feels that such an approach can help us move beyond the "victimization mentality" and the "poor mentality." "I feel that as women, if we want options, we have to work to create them. We have been coerced to fit *into* contexts, rather than encouraged to create our own contexts. We must move beyond this and realize that we can and need to be aggressive, active agents in the world."

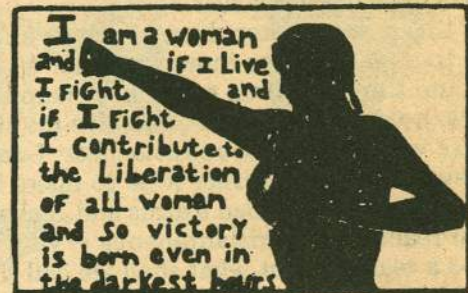
With her zestful and sharp command of words, Raven invites women to use their privileges and develop their talents. "I feel that women cannot

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Saxe Trial Ends in Hung Jury

by Jeanne Cordova and Shirl Buss

In a surprisingly quick trial, Susan Saxe, lesbian feminist anti-war activist accused of felony murder and bank robbery, has been relieved by a hung jury. Saxe, who pled not-guilty, still remains in a Boston jail. She is expected to be soon transferred to a federal prison where she will continue serving time on prior federal charges of bank robbery. The jury selection in the latest Boston trial began September 15, the trial itself on October 7, and the jury reported its verdict on October 13. A hung jury means the jurors could not come to the required unanimous decision. In response to a hung jury the prosecution may either drop the indictment, offer the defendant a deal, or move to retry. According to Byrna Aronson, of the Saxe Defense Committee, the prosecution has publically announced it will move to retry. As of press time however there has been no official move on any option by the prosecution. "We are waiting," Aronson commented.



A number of significant legal and political facts have come to light during Susan's trial. In pre-trial motions, Nancy Gertner, Saxe's lawyer, moved to have charges dismissed on grounds of unconstitutionality of the Massachusetts "felony murder" law. The law states that if a murder is committed during the course of a felony, all the defendants are indictable for first degree murder. The sentence, if convicted, is life imprisonment without parole. Though Gertner's motion was denied, the defense is taking the challenge to the Supreme Court.

Secondly, the Government's case in the Saxe trial has once more affirmed that the Government's hunt and prosecution of activists like Saxe, are politically, rather than legally, motivated. Spokeswoman at the trial said though the Government had bragged that the case was "open and shut," their case was actually "very weak." Aronson said even the jury was "surprised" by the lack of evidence. "If you recall some of the earlier trials, like that of Angela Davis, you remember all the acquittals. This is their (U.S. Government's) style. It's political harassment."

The Defense Committee continues its education and fundraising efforts. They are now some \$10,000 in debt, and must now raise additional funds for the expected re-trial. Send checks or write for further information to: Susan Saxe Defense Fund, c/o Philadelphia NLG, 1427 Walnut St., Philadelphia, PA 19102.

LESBIAN BROTHEL

by Marilyn P. and Sandy H. with thanks to
Ahshe G. and Ellen G. for their help

The idea grew from a spontaneous discussion held by a group of dykes. We all shared how we sometimes are lonely and in need of affection; we become horny and in need of sex. Yet we fear becoming more involved than we want to. We fear being turned away because of the space we are in. After all, we still believed that sex was equated with love, or power, or performance, or vulnerability. So we either accept our isolation or drain our energy wishing for a relationship. And, unfortunately, we sometimes even find an available man to fuck. This way out is obviously less than desirable for a lesbian and a feminist. Yet the horns of the patriarchy impale many a well-meaning sister who does not want to "use" another woman. What can we do?

At this point a sister shared with us a fantasy: "I go to a place where there are other women making love, and they welcome me. They wrap me with hot towels, hold and caress me, and give me the attention I desire with no conditions attached. I am free to do whatever I please, whether it be to make love or simply to lie in a woman's arms and feel at peace."

Our reaction was instantaneous — why can't this be a reality? But what shall we call this woman's sexual gathering place? "lesbian brothel," "feminary," "female caring space?" We had different names for it, but we all shared the same excitement of trying something new. The names reflect the various motives. It was seen as a revolutionary-political structure by some women, a therapeutic space by others, and a social spot for some. The feminary can be all these energies for different sisters . . .

The patriarchy teaches that women are primarily breeders and only secondarily sexual beings. (Thank Goddess, this tenet is finally being dispelled.) This male teaching prevents us from learning about and celebrating our own sexuality in our own ways. Since the first uncertain rushes of sisterhood, fear and distrust among the ranks existed. We are separated from each other because we are not sure of each other's motives/needs and purposes/desires. Ideally, we should be able to go to each other openly without fear of rebuff. We believe that our proposed center could work with problems in a remarkably productive manner. The brothel provides a place where all these "pig" reinforcements can be worked through, transformed, and turned into constructive spaces for women.

GIVIN' AND GETTIN'

The lesbian brothel spins off a number of patriarchal structures and attempts to use them toward improving women's lives. We get inside the "beast."

We can then use this knowledge to understand and to change the present structures.

In our lesbian caring center there will be women who work and women who come for the "service." A woman may enter and find other women who will give her what she desires. She may want heavy genital sexuality, sensual caressing; she may want merely to have her toes kissed and sucked; she may want to talk.

Our center will be collectively run; a woman joins, pays dues, exchanges roles as client and worker. This enables her to experience both sides of the transaction. Women traditionally have been locked into a particular role of sexual nurturance with limited choices. A woman may avail herself of the services and also learn to provide care for other women.

Until a women's culture develops a new economics, we see money as necessary. Although the brothel will be collective and non-profit, money is needed at first to sustain the brothel and to pay the workers. Paying a worker strengthens her image as a capable, "to-be-taken-seriously" woman helping other women. It also breaks the habit of volunteerism in women's social activities. Since the brothel is so novel for some women, paying for services may objectify the experience, thus making it more acceptable to use.

PRINCIPLES

The feminary combines the personal and the political. A feminist can see her decision to matronize the brothel as subjecting a personal problem to political analysis and then seeking a solution with other women. This process not only activates the strengths of women but also works toward overthrowing oppression. The brothel is political in its collectivism and its pro-women strategies:

First, the brothel allows us to collectivize our sex roles and not to see them as individual and personal as we have been taught. By isolating our sexual experiences women often miss the fullness of sexual expression, fall prey to sexual exploitation, or create false images about female sexuality. Sharing our sex needs and experiences will help us avoid these pitfalls.

Second, the brothel provides a space where we can begin to train our sexual energy and direct it toward radical purposes. Here we can work out the "prostitution" fantasy of the patriarchy. It also provides a service to women which has in the past been available only to men.

Third, the brothel enables us to explore the connection of sex to other areas of our lives, especially money

Something for everyone!



Women Loving, Victoria Hammond

and power.

Fourth, the brothel demystifies sex for us and separates our own sex needs from those of men. What is *our* reality?

Fifth, for lesbians the brothel eliminates covertness; we can be upfront with each other in a structured situation. Many women can explore "coming out" as a viable alternative, or they can explore any other revolutionary life-style in a self-affirming atmosphere.

OBJECTIONS — DECADENT AND KINKY!

Why the exchange of money? It's just prostitution! Flesh-peddling! We don't need it. The ideas are kinky! Decadent!

From a socialist-feminist perspective the brothel does once again commodify sex. If this is the extension of sexual relationships, then sex in this society is screwed up in the first place. Sex should be a natural flow from one person to another.

The radical feminists might holler that the brothel is just some more "personal change jazz," another

attempt at cultural revolution. And cultural feminism, according to the radical feminists, "promotes the therapy model of liberation and replaces political organizing with moral rearmament." (Brooke, "The Retreat to Cultural Feminism, *Feminist Revolution*, Redstockings, Inc. 1975, p. 68.) Pies-in-the-sky flourish, oppression deepens.

Some straight women are titillated by lesbianism and its trendiness, and would take advantage of the situation to act out their manipulation/seduction games on lesbians. Some dykes might fear being used by straight women in the brothel; "any relationship with a straight woman quickly disintegrates into some form of role playing." (C.L.I.T., "C.L.I.T. Statement no. 2," *Off Our Backs*, July 1974, p. 13.) Also, gay women with no political consciousness could leave a brothel experience reinforced further in patriarchal patterns.

A NATURAL FLOW?

Ironically enough, it seems we're participating in

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No Touching, No Human Contact — In Cell Block 4200

(Editorial Note:

The Sybil Brand Institute for Women (Los Angeles County Jail) has a long standing history of discrimination against women in the jail population alleged to be lesbians. No other California detention facility—local, county, state or Federal — discriminates in this manner.)

.....

The north half of SBI, the Los Angeles County jail for women, is dormitories for minimum security prisoners. The south half is cellblocks. Maximum security quarters. One half of one cellblock is reserved for lesbians, whom SBI staff euphemistically refer to as “exclusions.”

A confidential source, a woman who worked at Brand for many years, had let me know what to expect. There are more locked doors, more walls of welded chain-link fencing, more bars, more barriers of every sort. Depressing, but not surprising. SBI, I reminded myself, is a prison, after all.

A cell block is two rows of 12 cells each, back to back, with a common walkway for inmates down the front, then a wall of wire, bordered by another walkway for the guards. Finally the outside building walls, and high screened windows.

Each cell is cement block walled on three sides, steel bars in front. Each one is perhaps nine feet deep, at most ten or twelve feet wide, with what appears to be seven foot ceilings (though the larger area that contains them must be twelve feet high or more.

The interior dimensions are cramped by two steel spring bunks attached, one above the other, on one side wall, a tiny lavatory on the rear wall, an open commode on the opposite side wall near the rear, only partially hidden by a single locker. A desk and stool that look miniaturized complete the furnishings. The beds have two-inch mattresses.

The size of the cells seems to confirm that they were originally intended for one prisoner each. Now two is the official policy, but in Cellblock 4200, “the daddy tank,” three women in a cell is not uncommon.

Though two occupants would seem to get in each other's way moving about, the addition of a third occupant means putting a mattress on the floor — and another body inside the cell. (Occasionally, the former employee told me, a cell might be assigned a fourth inmate, and another mattress on the floor.)

No matter how many women occupy a cell, they have to share the lavatory, toilet, locker, desk and stool.

When I toured SBI on Sept. 25, a Friday, there were nearly 30 women in quarters for 24 (using two to a cell as standard). I was surprised at turning the



corner to the opposite side of the cellblock to find there were only 10 women housed in quarters for 24.

But those women were not “exclusions.” A guard said she thought the extra women in 4200 would probably diminish over the coming weekend as a result of releases, but other sources thought it more likely that the weekend would bring in new assignments.

Capt. Stephens asked the guard if the ten women in the other half might be transferred elsewhere, so that the lesbian women could be spread out more comfortably. She agreed it might be possible.

In later conversation, Stephens and Lt. Robertson conceded that the “exclusions” were all minimum and medium security prisoners confined in maximum security quarters.

That was necessary, they said, because lesbians had to be kept segregated from other prisoners — and there was no other area of suitable physical size. Dormitories are designated for 56 beds (but during the tour, I noted that most of them seemed to be at less than full capacity.)

The term “exclusion” is apparently no misnomer, though Stephens and Robertson disclaim any prejudice toward gay women — Stephens even said he had “a special kind of feeling toward them; they’re really good workers” — it is an unchallenged assumption



that they must be kept isolated.

In the interest of harmony, of course. It is apparently taken for granted that a lesbian woman will automatically prey upon other inmates, offending them and disrupting the institution, and if a woman admits to being a lesbian, or is judged by staff to be one, she is "excluded" before she has any chance to prove herself.

There is some opportunity for distinction. A woman who has been classified "exclusion" before would automatically go to 4200 on repeat imprisonments, unless she appeals and a classification board believes that she is no longer a problem — which means no longer a lesbian. That usually takes a husband and perhaps children as well as evidence of a "change."

Oddly, not all lesbians get "excluded." SBI officials operate on the role-stereotype theory. If a woman claims to be lesbian, she goes to 4200. If she doesn't admit her sexual preference, but comes into the jail wearing men's clothing — especially jockey shorts or carrying a wallet instead of a purse — she goes to 4200.

If a woman is assigned to other quarters, but is later found in a sexual relationship with another inmate, the "aggressor" goes to 4200 — but not her partner. If a resident of other housing areas is the target of complaints from fellow-prisoners that she is "coming on" to them, she may be transferred first to another dormitory (staff admits that conspiracies against individuals are not uncommon) but she will probably end up in 4200.

In 4200, if two women are discovered in a sexual relationship, the aggressor stays there. The passive partner is transferred out.

It would seem that such guidelines leave the facility wide open to manipulation by women who prefer to be with other lesbians, or who want to escape the "daddy tank," but staff claims that doesn't happen much.

Stephens and Robertson also state emphatically that minimum and medium security prisoners in 4200 have exactly the same privileges as minimum and medium security prisoners housed elsewhere. Same commissary rights, same meals, same dayroom hours, same cosmetics, same magazines and books, same movies and shows, same beauty shop opportunities, same education and counseling availability.

Except they have less freedom. They are constantly confined to the single half of the cellblock. When they want to go to the dayroom, a guard must unlock the cellblock, escort them to the dayroom, and lock them in there.

And except that their recreation must be taken in a center courtyard area between wings of the building — mostly paved and walled on three sides — and a guard has to accompany them to key the locks along the way.

And except that when attending movies, prison shows, or church services, they are seated together, with at least one or two rows of empty seats separating them from the others. That means always sitting at the back.

And except that their beauty shop is inside the building, not the one out in the grassy activity area.

And except that their only available work assignment is the prison laundry — and only one shift, the less desirable night shift, at that. "To keep them all together, and away from the others," Lt. Robertson explained.

It could be worse. It has been. Sources reported, and Robertson confirmed, that in earlier years the women in 4200 were more severely restricted. They got smaller cosmetics and commissary allowances, less correspondence privileges, restrictions on books, magazines, and photographs, for no other reason than punishment of their sexual orientation, apparently.

Nearly all of that has changed, with new regulations over the past year and a half, she said. And it is likely, she added, that there will be further changes. The county is now developing official guidelines for treatment of gay prisoners, both men and women.

But still there is the segregation, and the implicit condemnation and special punishment behind it. All apparently arbitrary and less than foolproof.

SBI staff admitted that not all lesbians end up in 4200, and it is certainly possible that some women sent to 4200 are not lesbian. The classification may result as often from personal judgment, as from any incident or problem to be treated.

For all the women at Sybil Brand, there is a prohibition against physical contact of any kind — be it affection, friendship, horseplay, love, or simple human support. No holding hands, no touch of the shoulder, no linking arms, emphatically no kissing or hugging.

Prisoners, in fact, must have special permission to even help each other brush or set their hair, or extract a particle from another's eye.



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Everywhere You Look . . . the



The Michigan Women's Music Festival (Mt. Pleasant, Michigan, August 20-22) was a time of sharing thoughts and visions, music and art, triumphs and tragedies. The overwhelming success of the festival was the product of women working collectively with a common goal, "... to create a physical/psychological space ... a cultural and spiritual expression ... a primary collective sharing."



"It's started — the smile that's gonna happen all weekend!"

Legislators Support ACLU Gays

Meeting recently with representatives of the Gay Rights Chapter (GRC) of Southern California's American Civil Liberties Union, Lt. Gov. Mervyn Dymally pledged that he would cast the deciding vote if legislation outlawing police-initiated sexual solicitation arrests were deadlocked in the State Senate. Last year the Lt. Governor flew back to California to cast the tie-breaking vote which enacted California's Consenting Adults Law.

Dymally spoke to the question during a day long ACLU work session in which approximately 75 individuals, representing chapters from all over southern California, lobbied in Sacramento for ACLU supported legislation.

Other highlights of the convocation included:

Carlotta Mellon, special advisor to Gov. Brown, agreed to include as a qualification for the Governor's appointment to office, that prospective candidates not exhibit homophobic tendencies and requested that the Chapter assist in drawing up guidelines in screening homophobic public officials.

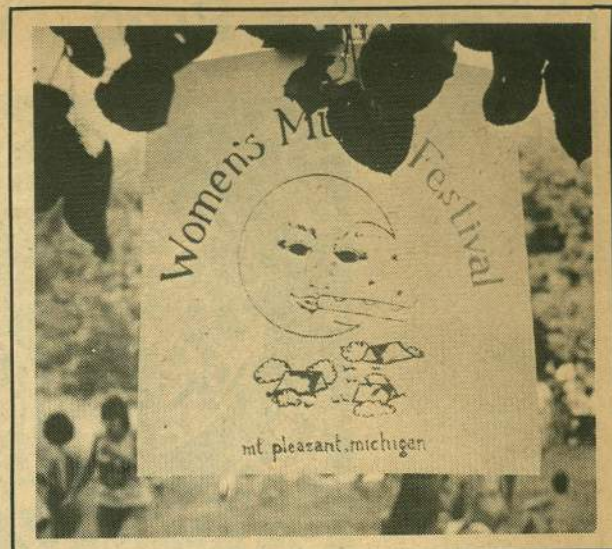
State Rep. Alan Sieroty (D. — Los Angeles), head of the Assembly Criminal Justice Committee, who re-affirmed his commitment to the enactment of legislation requiring citizen complaints as a prerequisite to sexual solicitation arrests;

Rep. John Vasconcellos (D. — San Jose, who discussed the progress of his two bills, one outlawing psycho-surgery and certain other behavior modification techniques on unwilling patients and prisoners, and the other requiring physicians, counselors, and other health professionals to receive training in human sexuality as a condition for licensing;

and Senate Majority Leader, David Roberti (D. — Los Angeles), who sought the chapter's assistance in the re-introduction of a judicial reform measure that would make it possible for attorneys to cite certain cases now restricted in court proceedings that, to a large measure, would aid gay defendants.

Michigan Women's Music Festival!

Produced by the We Want The Music Collective, the weekend was the best organized women's cultural event I have seen. Responsibilities such as distributing food, first aid, childcare, security, and clean-up were shared by all. The emblem in the photograph was silk-screened on T-shirts and taken home by many of the 2,000 who attended.



"I can't believe it's happening
Everywhere you look
you see women!"

Pictures and captions by E K Waller

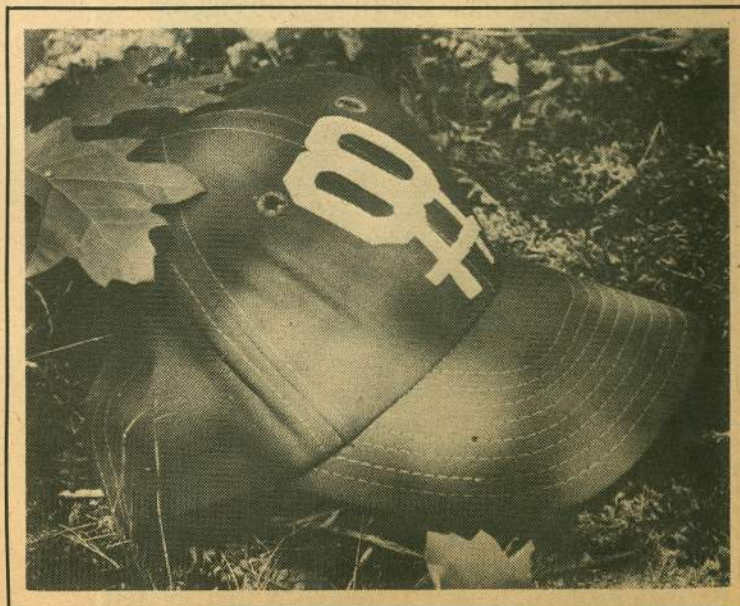


120 acres of land with fresh country air was the stage women set for the production of the festival.

The festival was both beautiful and tragic for me as a photographer. En route to Michigan the van I was riding in caught fire, and all my camera equipment (\$2,500 worth) was burned. However, sisterhood came through! When we finally arrived at the festival, via Greyhound, a collection was taken and we received enough money to get home, some clothes (from the Michigan Collective), and the promise of a benefit concert by several musicians.

This tragedy has shown me support that I didn't know existed, and strength that I didn't know I had, because I am still shooting pictures and I know that somehow I will eventually replace all my equipment.

by E K Waller



Dyketactics Prod, "Who Cooked the Last Supper?"



by Timmi Avicoli

The Eucharistic Congress — with all of its appalling pomp and circumstance — came to Philadelphia the week of August 1 - 8. The Congress, a mass gathering of Catholics from all over the world, received more than its fair share of coverage from local and national media. The City, in clear violation of the principle of the separation of church and state, hung banners all along the new (buycentennial-made) Chestnut Street Transitway and the Parkway, proclaiming: "Jesus, the bread of life." Area ACLU activist, and strong gay rights supporter, Spencer Coxe, appeared on the NBC News to protest this obvious example of non-separation of church and state.

Also interested in protecting the non-separation of church and state were area lesbian/feminist activists DYKETACTICS who arrived at the Eucharistic Congress on Friday morning, August 6, for a seminar entitled "Women and the Eucharist." Such topics as "Christian Lib" and "Man, Woman and the Eucharist" were to be discussed. According to Sherrie Cohen, DYKETACTICS "went down to enter into dialogue with those women about the role of women in the church . . . [and] the church's negation of sexuality."

It was more an "opening up of dialogue" than a confrontation. DYKETACTICS set up a table outside the Civic Center, where many of the ceremonies connected with the Congress were to be held. Lesbian literature as well as copies of their July 4 "Lesbian/Feminist declaration" (indicting the Man for his sexist institutions of church and state) were available for women to read. Women also carried posters, some of which said: "Who cooked the last supper?" "Did Jesus have a baby sister?" and "Church: Stop oppressing lesbians!"

The reaction of the people there, according to Cohen, was evangelical; they were "trying to save us." One woman even "promised to pray for me." Barbara Pauluck, however, told GCN that she felt their action reached a lot of women.

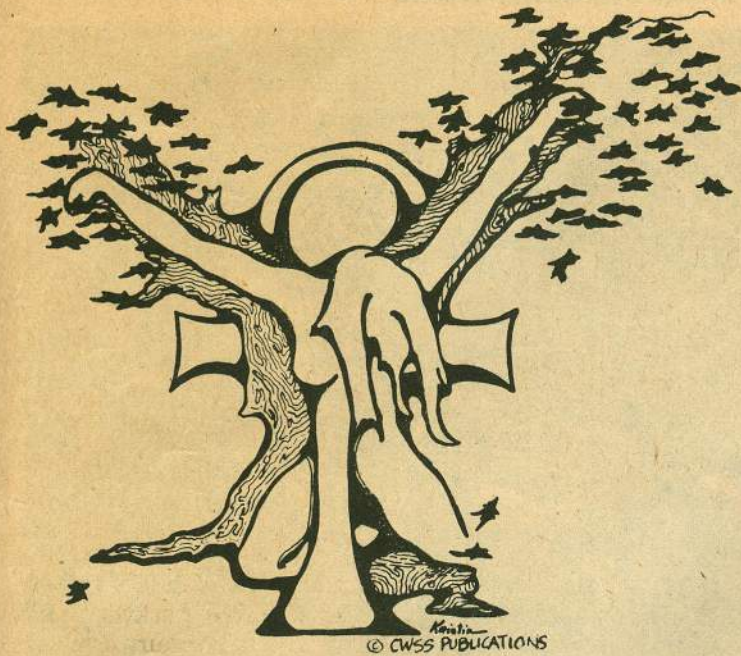
Later that same afternoon, DYKETACTICS visited the church of Sts. Peter and Paul on the Parkway. It being Hiroshima Day — the day people mourn for the Japanese killed during the bombings — the church had planned a mass to be attended by a large number of military leaders. The women stood on the corner as the procession of military and religious leaders filed past. It was a stark testimony to the reality of non-separation of church and state. The women chanted: "The church holds mass for murderers" and "the military does the church's dirty work."

On Sunday, the women gathered outside JFK Stadium in South Philadelphia where the closing ceremonies were held. They formed a witch's circle and hexed the Catholic Church, then blessed each other, dedicating themselves to working for the church's demise. One hundred thousand people were at the Stadium that afternoon to hear (via satellite) the Pope's message, and to hear a special address delivered *in person* by President Ford. The event was a clear example, Sherrie Cohen said, "of how the church and state conspire against women."

"Everyone who walked out [of the Stadium] had to pass us," Ms. Cohen told GCN. The pilgrims were "filled with holiness and wholesomeness after having been blessed by the church and state." Then they had to "deal with the fact that they were not showing Christian love" toward the dykes who gathered to protest their church's oppression of women. The DYKETACTICS signs were to that point: "The Pope's Encycilia and the Supreme Court decision conspire against homosexuals," "What happened to separation of church and state," and "Stop Vatican colonization of the U.S."

Reactions at this point were varied. One boy, Sherrie Cohen related, "was pounding his chest, shouting 'I'm a man, I'm a man! Women are second.'" A priest cornered Barbara Pauluck, sermonizing about how sexual organs were made for reproduction. Then, too, there was the women who merely said, "Oh no, no!" to which Barbara replied, "Oh yes, yes!"

Pope Joan; A Pie In The Face of God The Father



by Sharon McDonald

Heretics are my heroines; blasphemy turns me on.

As a fledgling feminist in 1970, one of the most jolting consciousness-raising experiences I had was learning that Eli Whitney was not, in fact, the inventor of the cotton gin. It seems his landlady was in actuality the brains behind the operation, but women weren't allowed to take out patents and so Eli gallantly did, and got, the honors. If Eli Whitney did not invent the cotton gin, then anything is possible!

The Roman Catholic Church admits to no official record of the existence of the woman who became pope in the ninth century. Happily for Joan and her fans, there have been a few malcontents willing to brave prompt excommunication to bring her to light.

One of them was even from *their* side, a testy fellow named Platina who wrote a *Lives of the Saints* that included a grudging reference to Joan and her papacy. Platina was once secretary to a pope and librarian to the Vatican, so one would think he ought to know. The tone of his passage about her is wistful regret tinged with disgust, which is considerably more tolerant than other churchmen whose response to Joan is horrified hatred. In a work written in 1588, Cardinal Baronius called Joan "A monster sent from hell," which is typical of the Church's attitude toward her when not denying her existence altogether.

In 1845, a Frenchman named Maurice Lachatre wrote a 10 volume document called (brace yourself) *History of the Popes: Crimes, Murders, Poisonings, Patricides, Adulteries, Incests from St. Peter to Gregory XVI, History of Saints, Martyrs, Fathers of the Church, Religious Orders, Councils, Cardinals, The Inquisition, Schisms and Great Reformers, Crimes*

of Kings, Queens and Emperors. Monsieur Lachatre apparently was accustomed to aiming high, and perhaps that is what he liked in Joan; he vigorously defended her existence.

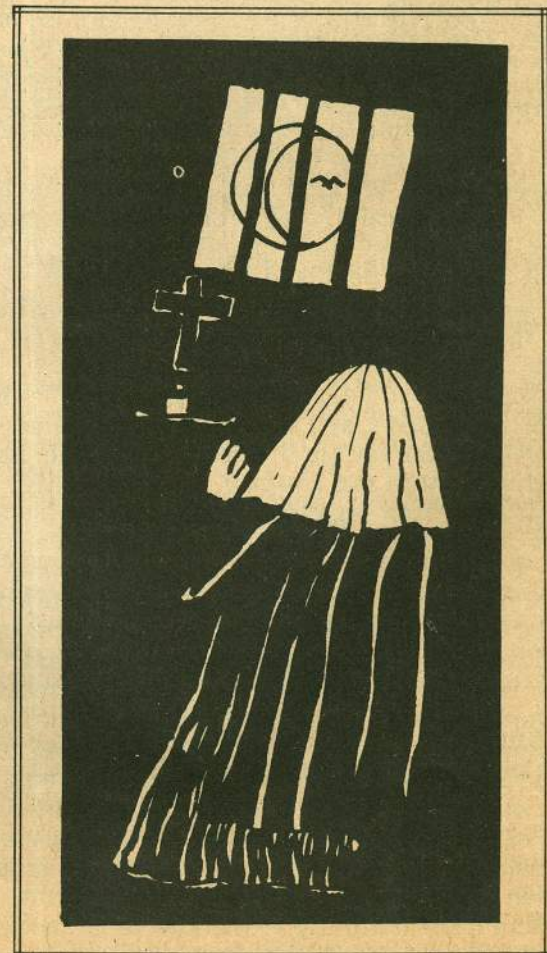
BEARDED WOMAN

But what of Joan herself? One of the most delightful and triumphant tales about her occurred when she was a teenager. Three traveling monks (monks figure heavily in this whole story) attempted to rape her. Though I'm sure Joan was a skillful and more importantly, dirty fighter, three against one is rather bad odds, so it looked as though the monks were going to win this one. But suddenly and yes, miraculously, Joan sprouted a full beard, which so startled the monks that they sprang up and scurried away, muttering mea culpa's all the way to confession. As soon as they had disappeared, so did the beard.

To tell Joan's story one has to spread out all the different versions and play eenie meenie miney moe or else pick one detail from Column A and one from Column B. From here on it's strictly do-it-yourself, and I'll give you lots of choices.

Everyone agrees that she was English, but beyond that it's anybody's guess or fantasy. She was born in 818, or else she was born in 820, if, of course, she was born at all. Her father was an English monk (I

continued on page 38



Charlotte

Women, Land & Power

Wolf Creek women convene to discuss community business.

Photo by Ruth Mountaingrove



by Elana and Blackberry

In June, 1975, a group of countrywomen came together at a WomanShare workshop (a women's retreat in southern Oregon) around the theme of "Land, Class and Power." Cognizant of the difficulties that women have in getting land and maintaining a livelihood on it, they came to the conclusion that a land trust was one solution to this problem.

The ideas behind the land trust concept are by no means new. Historically, they represent an integral part of many cultures. Early peoples in China, Africa, and the Americas all held land in common; and Native American tradition embodies a reverence for the land that regards western ownership claims as utterly incomprehensible. "Sell the country? . . . Why not sell the air, the clouds, the great sea?" The words are Tecumseh's, and serve as a good reminder of how recently the notion of private ownership has become dominant in this country. More recently, land trusts have been organized in Georgia for blacks who were formerly sharecroppers living on the edge of poverty. In California, migrant families who were victims of large scale agri-business found a solution in forming a land trust which gave their life economic and emotional stability. It is no coincidence that feminists living in the country and working toward the development of a new social order should strive to have control over their land and the resources on which they are so directly dependent. The challenge to countrywomen to develop ecologically sound practices of living and farming has given impetus to their cause. Their desire to share their energy, skills and woman power, to give support to one another, has led them quite naturally to the idea of collective ownership and collective living.

The land trust gives city women an opportunity to experience rural living before making a commitment to a new lifestyle. There they will have the opportunity to develop survival skills. Within these communities, women are moving toward becoming increasingly self-sufficient and less dependent on male-dominated institutions. Women in the country are demystifying those skills required for providing their own food and shelter.

The Oregon Women's Land (OWL) trust is a non-profit organization, founded to acquire land collectively for women and preserve it in perpetuity. Recognizing that most women are confined to cities with limited financial resources, OWL gives women the opportunity to have access to land for homesteading and farming, camping and retreats. Women need time and space to reclaim their culture. To hold land in trust eliminates owner/tenant power divisions and insures the protection of land from exploitation and speculation.

Sixty women from California, Oregon and Washington held the first Oregon Women's Land (OWL) conference in October, 1975, to make a dream reality. However, the legalities of being a non-profit organization and of tax exempt status imposed a system of structure which wasn't compatible with their needs. After turning away from alienating institutions, they were now forming an institution of their own and struggling to keep it non-rigid, but still meeting the corporate requirements. These women, who gain their sense of unity through ritual circles where each woman has the attention of the group and whose activities grow spontaneously and organically, wanted to bring what they had found from this way of life

to OWL.

They created a structure of a "circle of servants of 13" rather than a Board of Directors, and had working collectives instead of committees, which would disband as soon as a particular job was done. Decisions were made by consensus among those present. A member was any woman who felt identified with the organization. Leadership came from those women who had time and energy for this endeavor; it changed as new women became involved and others became less so. In order that every woman had the opportunity to take part in a discussion a rattle was passed around the circle and only the holder was empowered to speak.

At this first conference, it was agreed that the first piece of land purchased by OWL would be solely for women, for women's celebrations, summer camping and as a permanent home for as many residents as would be ecologically sound. When the conference ended, organizational tasks had been assumed and pledges to the amount of \$4,000 had been made.

By the time the second conference of OWL was held at WomanShare, this group of women had become adept in the building of the organization. The issue of class was a major concern at this meeting and members felt the land trust should make an effort to reach working class women.

LARGE OR SMALL?

By May, 1976, at the time of the third conference, the choice had been narrowed down to two properties: a large holding of two square miles in the wilderness of northern California, and 147 acres in southern Oregon. The California holding was especially attractive to 13 women who along with their six children had previously been evicted from their home in Mendocino County, and were now camping on the land with the owner's permission. They hoped to purchase part of this and wanted OWL to buy the rest to develop a matriarchal village. It is beautiful mountainous land with numerous meadows and a river on its southern border. The river, however, was far from the road and possible house and garden sites, which meant water could be a problem in the late summer months. The asking price of \$225,000 was a concern even though the price per acre was very low.

The Oregon land was nestled at the end of a valley with open fields and framed with a wooded ridge. It has an old large log cabin house which has had an addition built on to it and has been modernized with gas refrigerator, stove, and lights. It has an artesian spring that provides running water for the house and the run-off from two ponds irrigates the vegetable garden. There is also a green house and chicken coop-barn. The closest neighbor lives out of sight about $\frac{3}{4}$ of a mile away. It is 13 miles from Canyonville, Oregon, a small town, which could possibly provide employment for women if needed or a place for a small business. The land is close to a main highway which provides access to several other women's communities in the area. The price was \$65,000 which was quite reasonable considering that it is a developed piece of property.

The women at the conference had a sense of anticipation, excitement and apprehension because a number of them had invested time and energy in the search for land and many had developed close ties to these separate and very different pieces. They feared that a decision on one of the two parcels might cause a split in the organization. Would OWL move towards building a large matriarchal village in a remote area or would it establish smaller individual communities separate from one another, each with different purposes being dependent on the characteristic of the particular land? The California land was large, remote and less developed than the Oregon holding which was more modest in size and more centrally located for Oregon women as well as being close to other women's communities.

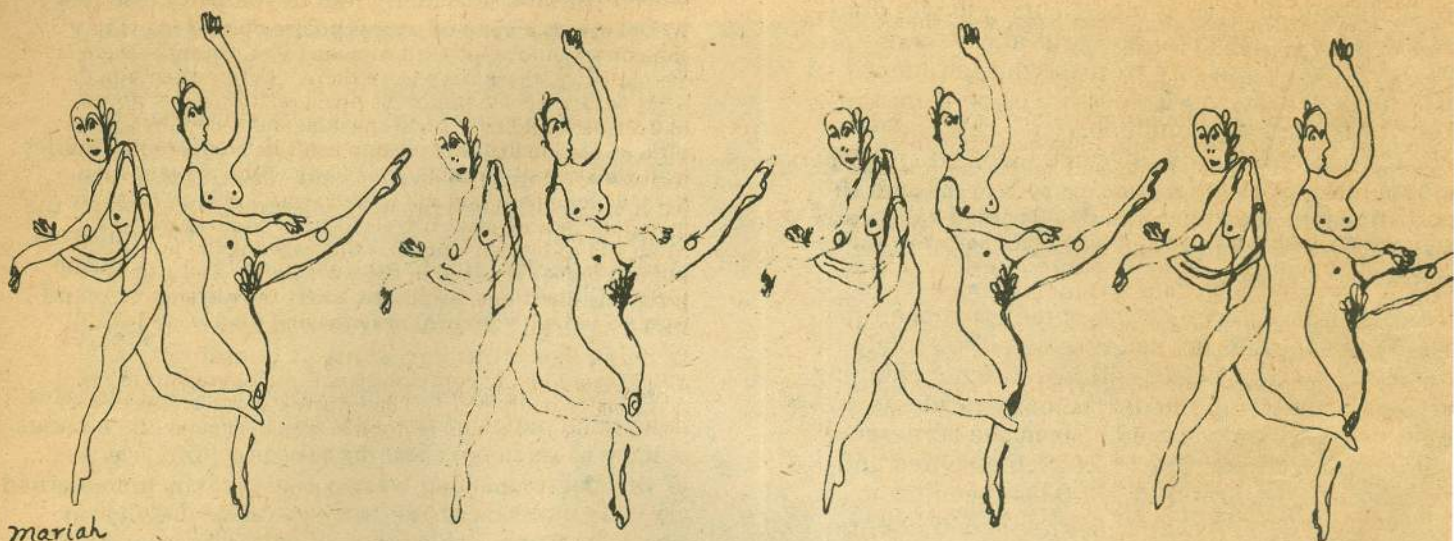
There were six women who supported the California land. The plight of the 13 women who were without a place to settle and wanted OWL to purchase part of the California land was a situation which concerned all. The question arose "why must we decide on either land now, why not wait to find a large holding which the California women and OWL could support together?" But many of the women who had been spending months doing organizational work felt the need to put some of their energy into developing a community now — seeing the dream become a reality. It was also felt that a piece of land accessible to women in Oregon could help stimulate greater interest and support for OWL as well as providing a permanent home for a small group of women and a short-term retreat for those women still living in the city. To purchase the Oregon land now was feasible, as the necessary money for the down-payment had been raised.

The women who had expressed negative feelings toward the buying of the Oregon land were asked again to state their position once more. It was difficult to separate the personal feelings around this issue from what might be best for the group as a whole. Three stipulations came out of this: (1) the next effort would go toward the acquisition of a larger and more isolated piece, (2) that the land would also be bought which would meet the needs of working class and third world women, and (3) that OWL would oppose logging.

"Do we vote now or what?" the chairwoman asked. Voting was something they had never done. They had always felt a consensus. "Hug the woman on your left if you are for buying the Oregon land," someone joked. The circle of women slanted downward as each woman embraced the next. The tension broke and a sense of unity came back to the group. The meeting ended with the women making monthly pledges that totalled over \$200 per month and several assuming responsibility toward the legal tasks of purchasing the land.

OWL needs your help in many ways. Please send all contributions, monthly pledges and inquiries to Oregon Women's Land, PO 1713, Eugene, Oregon, 97401. Make checks payable to Women's Place, Oregon Women's Land. Brochures are available.

Towards A Feminist Expression of Sado-Masochism



edited by Jeanne Cordova

PART I

(Editorial Note: The following is a transcription of the "Healthy Questions About Sado-Masochism" workshop at the Women's Health & Healing Conference, October 10th, 1976. The workshop was attended by 12 women, all lesbians except one heterosexual who so defines herself in the transcript. Names have been deleted because the workshop was taped with consent of all so that information could be published to other lesbians and feminists, yet not permission to use names was asked or given. Because the tape recorder was small, several voices, particularly in the back of the room, did not get picked up. Due to the length of the transcript, 26 pages, Part II will appear in the next issue (see end of article for topics covered in Part II). See the end of article for bibliography. Two S & M rap groups have begun in Los Angeles. Women interested are welcome to send letters addressed "Rap Group" c/o The Tide. Letters will be forwarded to rap group facilitators. Lesbian feminists only.)

WK: Are any two people here lovers?

(Group response, "No," "Why?")

WK: We thought it might be inhibiting if someone had their lover here. A few of us already considered this and decided with our lovers that only one of us would come to this workshop.

Some of the guidelines we want to set out the beginning. I feel very positive about the things I've been doing in regard to S & M and I don't want to become preoccupied at an early stage whether S & M is feminist or moral. I think there are a lot of people here who need more information and permission before we slap sanctions on ourselves.

Perhaps we could begin by going around the room each woman saying what brought her to the workshop and where she is at, trying to be as honest as possible. This is the first time I have gone "public" and I know if other people were they're at, what they're doing, and not doing and why, it would certainly make me feel safer.

C: O.K. I'll start. I got really high talking about S & M at WomanShare for the first time in Oregon. During Lesbian Sexuality Week one of the workshops was on it. It was so wonderful talking about it with 17 dykes none of whom had ever talked about it with other dykes before.

I got a lot of information, things people had done, fantasies people had, what's politically correct. We just batted the ball around. I heard a lecture by the Janess society (San Francisco). The woman who gave it was terrific. They have a sexuality training program for counselors you can take, part of it is on S & M. Most of what I heard in the lecture was either heterosexual or male homosexual, and virtually nothing on lesbian S & M. I haven't read the article you mentioned (June, *Off Our Backs*) but I've read some others.

SCARY FEELINGS ABOUT POWER

L: That article was a real nothing, you didn't miss anything.

CP: I'm here because I've had a lot of fantasies about S & M. So far it's just fantasy, but about 90% of my fantasy life is S & M. It's not something I've had a lot of experience with as far as acting out, though I've had some experience with bondage and being tied up. I need to do some exploring because it brings up a lot of real scary feelings about power, about how power is related to sex, and how much power I'm willing to let myself have, and how far I'm willing to let myself go.

WK: I wanted to do a workshop myself and a half dozen women I know are into S & M or bondage and discipline or one of the two, wherever the line is. . . we're not exactly sure what we're doing! I've never talked about it with other lesbians. I wanted to sort of come out! I've always felt affirmative about it but I have a lot of questions and some fears, like what you (CP) said about exploring power in sex and taking the cap off of that is really scary. Everyone is into some form of power in sex anyway, but I felt that those of us who are into B & D and S & M are doing it consciously. I know that's healthy, but I know it's scary. Sometimes I wonder how far would I really go, either as a sadist or masochist? What are my limits? What are healthy limits? What are feminist limits? What are human limits? What are my limits, anyway! I've had five relationships with women in which S&M has been part of the sexuality, though it's never been all of my sexuality. One of the things I like is having different sexualities and getting to mix them up. Some of my experiences have been somewhat negative, and some very positive. I used to think if it's S&M it will *all* be positive, or *all* be negative. But I've found it's like anything else, it's always been colored by my feelings for the woman, or hers about me, and what's going on in the rest of the relationship out of bed.

because I've finally met my match! And now there are a large group of women in a West Coast city who are sado-masochist and have come out and talked about it, but they still feel the need to stay in the closet about that because of their jobs, because of other lovers and friends.

WK: And because of the feminist movement?

Q: And because of the feminist movement, yes. I work at a feminist health collective and I just came out there as an ex-hooker. And *that's* heavy and people are freaking out about that, much less my coming out as a sado-masochist! We had a sexuality workshop a year and a half ago, and I co-facilitated and came out as a sado-masochist there and got *no* support . . . from one person out of a hundred women. I was so fed up I almost quit my group.

A: I would like to give you support because I think you are carrying burdens at this time in history.

Q: I also really want to talk about feminism and the issue of choice and freedom to do what you want to do, and have fantasies you want to and still be committed to the movement. I'm one of the most committed feminists that I know and my sex life has very little to do with it.

NOT AS SIMPLE AS BUTCH/FEMME

RM: I've just come from an East Coast city where I interacted with (a lesbian organization) women and a lot of them were self-defined as butch or femme for their entire lives. So I suppose one way of talking about S&M is to talk about roles.

Q: I think that's a good point. In some ways dominance and submission is like playing butch or femme role.

WK: In my experience butch and femme don't always correspond to sadist and masochist. I've seen it reversed. You can be a butch masochist or femme sadist, or switch off every other night, during the middle of the night, or every other year. I've known women who will do one role for four years and then really get in touch with their masochism and want to get into that.

L: This is like pre-women's movement?

WK: I'm talking about right now. Lesbian feminists.

Q: What about a woman having the freedom to tell her lover where she is at (with S&M)?

WK: Yes, I think we should talk about that later.

I'M A COMMITTED LESBIAN MASOCHIST

Q: I just want to give a lot of support for having this workshop. I was planning to attend the Lesbian Sexuality Workshop and planning to bring S&M up there, but I was planning to be disappointed if people didn't want to handle the subject.

I have been out as a sado-masochist for several years. How out I am has depended on my groups or friends. I have done S&M lesbian groups. I've experienced both sadism and masochism. I'm an ex-hooker, I used to dominate men, and now K

I'm a committed lesbian and a masochist. I need some element of trust for this to be a good session for me and to share the information that I have. So I hope that happens and if you feel uncomfortable with some of the things I'm saying either give me feedback or leave the room!

I have had sado-masochistic activities going on in my life since I was a child. In girls clubs we would play around and tie each other up. I've always had fantasies. But they were always men until I was about 21. Then I began to find women who weren't into it as strongly as I was and I felt shy about initiating things. In the past two years that has really changed

IT'S NOT RAPE

CP: I used to feel guilty and think maybe what men say "every woman wants to be raped" is true because I had those kind of fantasies of sado-masochism. It took me a while to realize there is a difference between setting up a

game with my lover and saying this is my fantasy, where you have the control, that's different from rape, which is not consensual.

WK: There is a bond of trust if you're doing S&M with someone you love, or even someone you just met—there is a *complicity*, there is a *choice* there. Often when you do S&M with someone you're having a relationship with its like a trust-building. I feel spiritual about certain aspects of it. This kind of relationship can't be compared with a man violating or invading your body without permission.

S: A woman here said she was straight, and into S&M with men, and I know what it feels like not to be heard in a room full of lesbian women. She asked if the lesbians minded if she remained in the workshop. She said she had some questions, wondered about the differences between S&M with women, never having tried it, and with men.

MR: I feel like my consciousness is really low but my fantasy level is really high! The information that I have is really male, so I would really like to participate. So I want to know how you feel about my being here?

Z: I feel good about you're being here. It's rare to find a workshop on S&M and as long as you are open and tell us where you are at, it's fine.

WK: I also feel that hearing about your experiences in S&M with men will help me define differences about how it is with women. I feel a gut level integration between my being a sado-masochist and a feminist but I can't find the words for it yet because I know so little. So it's fine with me.

ND: I came primarily to get definitions clear about how people define different acts. What is the fine line which divides S&M from rape? Is there a fine line? Is it a continuum? There are very distinct differences in my mind. Having been in many women's groups I find that most women have indulged in fantasies that have to do with S&M. I could name the T.V. shows and books that my fantasies come out of. I want to clarify for myself just what the issues involved here are.

SJ: Around our community there are a lot of under-the-table jokes that go on and I feel it's real necessary to get it out into the open. I mean I have a lot of hesitations, most women do, around this subject. No one has really sat down and clarified exactly what happens, and I want to clear some of that up.

THE POPULAR MYTH

WK: Perhaps it would be good to start with terms of demystification. For a long time I thought that anything, like tying someone up, was S&M. And I get the impression that the popular myth in our community, and probably everywhere else, is that if you ever tie someone up or are tied down you are a raging sadomasochist.

I don't think that's true. It doesn't bother me being out as a sado-masochist, it bothers me that few people know what they are talking about: that the part they think is true is untrue and the part they think is untrue is probably very true! Shit! Actually I think it's been more of a problem for my lovers than for me, and I resent that.

A: I know what you mean, when this workshop was announced there was a lot of nervous laughter in the audience.

Q: All those people would probably love to come here and not be so uptight. They are probably having fantasies or maybe doing even doing things and they want to talk about it, but there is a lot of fear and miseducation.

SJ: When I got here this morning and wanted to be in this workshop I was told, "Oh, that one is full, that one got jumped on real fast."

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Sado-Masochism; Control, Bodywork and Spirituality

continued from page 15

Q: How many people are here and didn't sign up because they didn't want to put their name on the sign up sheet?

WK: I almost didn't.
(Two others raised their hands.)

Q: When we did our rap group we made it anonymous. I was real nervous today because other people from my group were splitting up all the workshops to cover everything and they asked me, "What one are you going to?" And I said, "Well, I'm signed up for lesbian sexuality, but I might go to a different one." I wasn't able to say "I'm going to the S&M workshop," but finally I just said fuckit and I told them and they all gave me this look!

A: I feel like we're putting that kind of negative energy back on to ourselves because I came here and someone asked me where I was going and I told them right out.

Q: Maybe I feel that way because I'm really into it. If I came here for "education" I probably wouldn't back an eyelash to tell anyone.

THE PRINCIPLE IS CONTROL, THE PRINCIPLE IS PAIN

ND: I've always heard that S&M on the west coast means "slave and master" and S&M on the east coast is "sado-masochism," and B&D on the west coast is "bondage and dominance" and B&D on the east coast is "bondage and discipline."

WK: And they probably all amount to exactly the same thing on both coasts.

ND: I read the articles you talked about (*Off Our Backs*) and I found them to be insulting and shallow.

Q: It was like women who hadn't had experience with S&M wrote them. Like a straight feminist wrote an article about what it's like to be a lesbian. I was infuriated.

WK: I have a definition that I have used though I didn't read it anywhere. I think it's like a gradation.

Q: What is?

WK: Sexuality, any kind of sex, then bondage and dominance, and then sado-masochism is all on a continuum of control. Most sex in this society is based on control, on giving and taking. I think this can be real unhealthy or real wonderful and beautiful depending on if you're talking about consensuality or force—as in the case of men virtually raping women both in and out of bed. I think the principle in 'Bondage and Domination' is control, the giving and taking of control, i.e. tying people down, telling your partner to do things, being told what to do, giving commands, inacting a fantasy. Whereas the principle in S&M is pain, which is perhaps one step beyond, if it is on a continuum. Masochists don't see pain as pain, if they did it wouldn't be any fun. But if you interpret pain as pleasure then you get off on it. Yet I've known women who will stop at one point, they really dig tying someone down, or being tied down, but there's just a blank after that. They don't have further fantasies. It's not a denial. Some people say "I won't go further," but sometimes it's just, I can't relate to that, it's just not my thing." To me it's amazing what people dig sexually and what they don't. It's like apples and oranges, so different.

Q: What about emotional S&M?

A: Personally I can't handle emotional S&M! I feel my relationships with people have always been real open and egalitarian, and my sadomasochism is real different from that. If my sado-masochism was to be lived out on an emotional level it would be very oppressive indeed to the relationship.

Q: But is emotional S&M a part of sexual S&M? Or is it something that's irrelevant?

A: That's a good question.

WK: I'm not sure what all the connections are there. I usually refer to it as 'in-bed-S&M' and 'out-of-bed S&M.' I first was introduced to this area through emotional S&M, which I found very costly. It was for shit! Then I found the more I got into actualizing my fantasies in bed, the less I wanted it or got into it out of bed.

A: I think it's a real healthy outlet.

WK: Emotional S&M often proceeds unconsciously and it's real harmful if you don't know what you are doing, because it's so pervasive! A lot of gay men do out-of-bed S&M.

The whole relationship from the time they wake up til night, I mean the masochist sleeps on the door step! I think it would be a drag to relate to someone on your doorstep... especially a woman! What might be fun in bed for an hour can be a real drag on a 24 hours basis. I mean I might play a game with a lover for a whole evening going out somewhere or something, a game that is either spoken or unspoken. But I think emotional S&M really limits a relationship. I guess it depends on what kind of relationship you want with your partner. I think what gay men do is hard to pull off if you are a woman because it sort of means having to maintain a total perspective of the other person as always a sadist or masochist and very little else.

D: I knew a woman who though she wanted to get into S&M and then totally freaked out behind it when she did.

Q: There are some fantasies that are even better if you live them out. But there are some, that if you live them out, are worse. It's real possible to have a negative experience. Some of that has to do with being able to tell your partner what you want, and don't want. If you just sort of say vaguely, "Oh I have this fantasy of being tied up" and you don't give all the conditions — what part of your body you want tied to what, — then the person is just going to have to make it up and they might feel awkward, or might fuck it up, and their guilt and apprehension about doing it might make you not able to get off, or make it very different from the way it was in your head.

D: I hear that, but what I'm saying is, what happens in the case where the person is totally freaked out and you can't touch her because she's afraid of you and you're alone with her and she's hysterical?

WK: Are you saying you've had that experience and want to know what to do?

D: No, I know of the experience in which it happened.

Q: Did the fantasy stop when she wanted it to stop?

D: She got hysterical, of course it stopped. I don't know which came first.

WK: I guess in that case one should call a friend of the person immediately. Someone she trusts. And just stay there and not panic.

ND: I think when an act like that goes beyond the point of consent, when someone takes it beyond that point, that's when you're getting into rape. That is where the line is drawn.

MASOCHISM AS BODY WORK

A: It seems to me that S&M sex per se has very little to do with politics.

Q: I feel S&M sexuality is political to the extent that the personal is political. The way I conduct myself in my personal life makes a statement about what I believe. What I believe is that I want to open up at almost any expense! And that's the way I feel about my masochism. I feel like it's body work. I've done a lot of Reichian work, letting go, and making sounds, and getting out things that bother me. When you spoke of that woman who got hysterical... sometimes I really

clearly define what I want with a lover and we're doing it and before I've gotten off on it all of a sudden I'll get real sad and start to cry, and stuff will come up. Then we'll work with that and it will be therapeutic. I see my sado-masochistic experience as a very positive, progressive opening up of my body and emotions. For example, being restrained has helped me with releasing energy in my pelvic area that has been blocked. If I am tied up to the point that the only area I can move is my pelvic area then I really have to push and get out all the anger I've held in there, and all the feelings that I've blocked. If I want to scream and yell I can do that too. I've never been allowed to make those sounds before. I feel that's positive and political. In this society you are *not allowed to express your body* as much as your mind. . . you're not even allowed that! I can't run around naked in the streets, I can't masturbate in public. All the things I really want to do, I can't do! That's probably why I have such intense sexual expressions.

CP: I like what you say about being able to move around violently and scream and yell. Those are things I enjoy too. Another thing I enjoy about S&M is *being able to be as strong as I am*. Not feeling like I have to hold back and treat her like, or be treated like, I'm fragile.

Talking about pain. . . I may not set up a situation where I say I give my lover the right to spank me or to slap me but, when I am getting progressively more turned on toward orgasm, pain gradually diminishes and turns into something else. So for me, being bitten really hard or being scratched, or being beaten is a turn on. When I'm down and cooled off I might say, my god, what have I been doing, but because I was aroused it's a whole different expression.

UNION AND PARADOX

WK: It's important to me to really be able to feel good about myself and my lover afterwards. I was going to ask a question of the masochists. I was going to say, sometimes S&M control worries me more from a masochist's point of view, but maybe I'm projecting!

Q: Ask what you want to ask, I love it!

WK: Thank you.

Q: We could have a little demonstration!

WK: I don't know exactly what my question is. Perhaps I'll start with statements about myself. I have found that one of the things I, as a sadist, dig most and one the things I find most spiritual, is possession. Which to me is articulated through control. Sometimes that scares me because I know the ultimate possession, which is union . . . is paradoxical in that we are all born only to die and that's the paradox of being alive. All this ties in, with me, with S & M . . . the paradox of being two separate bodies and loving someone and wanting to be united. Taking or having complete control, or having another woman give me that much control, total control, to me is one of the most beautiful experiences I've ever had.

WK: Yet sometimes it scares me because I know in all of us and certainly in me, there is that wish to be totally united — if just for a few seconds. I guess it's a fascination with the totalness that is the turn on for me.

Q: The feeling is that someone is completely submitting to everything you want and by doing so is really giving themselves up and uniting themselves with you?

WK: Well, it's not just that they're uniting with me. I feel that too. It's very reversed, I feel I become them too.

Q: I love to submit to someone that I trust and love. I can't have casual S&M sex anymore. It doesn't work. It's a skill and a trust and getting really close to someone, and works much better this way. Though I don't put it down because I've had lots of casual S&M sex. Just for me, it works better when there is an emotional component there. In that respect I love to totally submit and give myself to someone who will demand of me anything that they want me to do. I *will show my dedication or my love by doing whatever they want*. And of course they already know the things that I want! So it works out real well.

WK: If you've met your match!

Q: If you've met your match.

(Editorial Note: Part II, "Toward a Feminist Expression of Sado-Masochism" will cover topics such as: Telling Her What You Want-Problems, The Masochist Is In Control, How To Form a Rap Group, Some of My Best Friends Aren't, Education Is Necessary, Re-Defining S&M Between Women, Equipment, Books & Literature.)

SUGGESTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

(Editorial Note: The following books were suggested and discussed by members of the workshop in Part II. We print them here for those who are in a hurry (to learn more)! The comments printed are those from the workshop. According to the workshop participants most are available at local bookstores.)

My Secret Garden: "popular pseudo-feminist work . . . has some good S&M fantasies."

The Story of O: "If you're past the beginning stages."

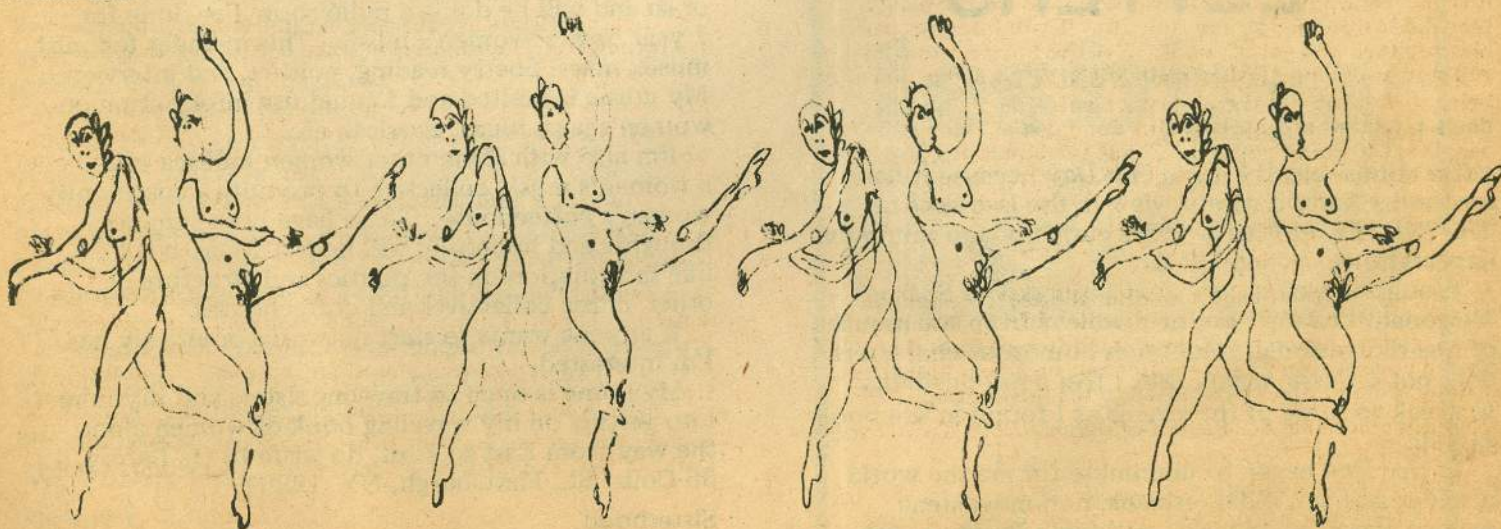
The Image: "about two women, slave and master, and a man . . . a female Story of O . . . really beautiful." Grove Press, french named author.

The S&M Taboo: "educational book . . . partial lesbian bibliography in back."

Bondage Trash: The Olympia Book Society (publishers), author: Jon Horn. "trash, as name implies . . . but very specific" (not in most bookstores, see adult bookstores)

DeSade: (Selected Writings, Justine, anything . . .) Lancer Books, NY.

(*Women interested in more literature as it becomes available, send \$1.00 for postage and research, c/o the Lesbian Tide.)



WHO WE ARE

The Lesbian Tide is a feminist lesbian publication financially supported by the community it serves. It is published by the Tide Collective and produced by the pride and energies of a staff who are committed to one or more specific departments within the magazine. The staff is continually open to new women who wish to become involved in journalism and communications or who see media as a vehicle for activism. The collective is open to staff members who share the political perspective (radical feminism) of the Tide Collective, have a long-term commitment to the survival and growth of *The Lesbian Tide*, and have been on the staff for six consecutive months.

STAFF

Editorial Board: Shirl Buss, Bobbi Behar (copy), Jeanne Cordova (news), Sharon McDonald (Community focus).

Coordinators: Barbara Gehrke (Circulation, Production), Jeanne Cordova (Advertising, Editorial).

Production Crew (this issue): Bobbi Behar, Shirl Buss, Jeanne Cordova, Pam McDonald, Barbara Gehrke, Linda Waywoman.

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The opinions expressed in this magazine are not necessarily those of the Tide Collective.

This publication is on file at the International Women's History Archive, 2235 Oak Street, Berkeley, CA 94709, and is available on microfilm through Bell and Howell, Drawer "E", Wooster, Ohio 44691.

This publication is also on file and available on microfilm from Xerox University Microfilms, 300 No. Zeeb Road, Ann Arbor, Michigan 48106.

LETTERS

A TENDER REBUTTAL

Dear Lesbian Tide Editors,

After almost passing up *In Her Day* because it had received a fairly critical review in the last issue of *The Tide*, I read it with vague curiosity and minimum expectations.

I found myself agreeing with the gist of Sharon McDonald's review: political volleys from the mouths of one-dimensional, sometimes humorous characters does not a classic make. But I feel a responsibility to speak to some of the strengths I found in the book as well.

In Her Day began to illuminate for me the world of older women, older lesbians, non-movement women and professionals. Although Brown's characterizations of Adele, LaVerne, and Carole were

often too shallow, too glib and too secure in their roles as establishment dykes, their concerns gave me new emotional insights into why such women find it hard to connect to the movement. From their vantage point, the movement activists (represented by Ilse) often appeared absurd, ridiculous and contradictory. My first response was a defensive "How could she mock radical feminists so?" But later reflection led to a recognition that this image of the movement is very real for many women. I found myself trying to figure out ways to initiate a cross-fertilization of these two realities as a feminist strategy.

Also I found the few sexy scenes to be tentative, titillating inroads toward a genre of healthy soft-core erotic lesbian feminist pornography. Always starving for crumbs of lesbian content and sexuality in fiction, I was glad to be reading an upfront book for me, and it made me want more, more, more.

My need to make a note of some of the strengths of *In Her Day* comes from my belief that it is more important than ever for us to continue our search for feminist forms of criticism. I feel we need to recommit ourselves to giving supportive as well as growth producing feedback to our cultural workers.

If a reviewer, in her equally important search for honesty cannot give a favorable review of a work, perhaps *The Tide* could solicit a more favorable review and publish them side by side. This would be a way of giving the artist nurturance as well as critical feedback for future growth. The readership would profit from dual reviews of controversial works, as it would provide an opportunity to further develop critical capacities and would discourage "party line" thinking.

Feminist criticism will always be a tender issue, but a renewed concern for it in these tender times can only make us all stronger.

Shirl Buss

Dear Sisters,

I've just returned from 3 months of summer travels over the U.S. identifying with women in the areas I went to. Yet there are so many women I didn't see.

I've now returned to where I'm living for 6 months or so and will be doing a radio show I've done for 1 year now — women's music. This includes feminist music, news, poetry reading, politics, and interviews. My music is limited and I could use information on women's jazz, blues, classical, etc.

I'm also with some other women looking into a women's music collective to promote a community women's coffeehouse. These have been summer thoughts and hopefully will be fall doing, but I'd like information on the politics and structure of other music collectives and coffeehouses.

If anyone wants to start networks or already has I'm interested.

My home is open to traveling sisters and if you're into getting on my traveling book of women along the way from East to West, do write to Oz Larose, 56 Court St., Plattsburgh, NY 12901.

Sisterhood,

Oz

SISTERHOOD IS PAINFUL

Dear Tide Collective,

I would like to write in reply to Naomi Weissstein and Heather Booth who wrote "Will the Woman's Movement Survive?" (*Lesbian Tide*, October '76). I think that, as they suggest, it may not survive; and if it does not it will be not for lack of organization, but because women just don't care about each other. We have developed a double standard of ethics that decrees that it is sexist and terrible for men to beat up, fuck over and generally make a macho ass of themselves to a woman, but it's considered A-OK for women to do the same things to other women. I am living proof of the failure of the feminist ideals among lesbians. In February I was thrown out of an Atlanta lesbian bar after being manhandled by the two women owners and beat up by a friend of theirs outside the bar. As I don't own a car, and usually ride taxis to bars, on the way home I was abducted and raped in an isolated spot not far from the bar.

This brings up the question of how much responsibility we owe each other. There are some of you who would argue that liberated women are not supposed to be bogged down with concepts like responsibility, that being a straight, old-fashioned concept. We are now supposed to be freed from old, fogey ideals such as tenderness, loyalty and monogamous relationships. We are supposed to be happily engaged in "free love" (which, if I remember correctly, was a male idea, intended to force women into going with men with less resistance).

But we have bought this male idea; we go happily along fucking each other over, feeling no sense of responsibility to the other woman. This, sisters, is what has ruined us lesbians, no responsibility toward each other and little emotional maturity.

I think, Naomi and Heather, that if we want to save the movement we are going to have to start working on those things.

If we insist on destroying each other, then the male system will be more than justified in destroying all of us!

Pat

GODDESS JOINS TIDE STAFF?

Dear All Workers on latest (Sept/Oct.) Tide:

What Goddess ascended upon your paper this month to change it from years of negativity, judging, preaching, — to positiveness and articles full of human interest, variety, and balance.

WOW — my mind is blown.

Now, if you would have a comprehensive calendar of events — and dispense with those certain unsisterly exclusion policies you've been fostering, you will have the community paper so many of us have long sought for — in vain — and I shall be convinced your goddess(es) really arrived and weren't merely passing by.

And in gross, down-to-earth terms, I shall purchase 10 subscriptions so my friends and I can have a year of "divine" reading experience. Hoping you accept my cooperative offer.

With Sisterly Love,

Barbara L. Bright

Editorial Note: Thank you for your supportive letter. May the Goddess likewise descend on you.

Buy THE TIDE Here:

Los Angeles Area
Eastside

Alcoholism Center for Women
1147 S. Alvarado
(Alvarado & Olympic)

Chatterton's Bookstore
1818 N. Vermont
(Vermont & Hollywood Blvd.)

Woman's Building Coffeehouse
1727 N. Spring St.
(also at Sisterhood Bookstore at same address)

Gay Community Services Center
1213 N. Highland
(Highland & Santa Monica Blvd.)

L.A. Women's Saloon
4908 Fountain Ave.
(Fountain, west of Vermont)

Westside

Feminist Wicca
442 Lincoln Blvd.
(Lincoln at Rose Ave.)

Feminist Horizons
10586½ West Pico
(Pico, east of Overland)

Papa Bachs Bookstore
11317 Santa Monica Blvd.
(just west of San Diego Freeway.)

Women's Center
237 Hill Street
(Ocean & Hill)

Sisterhood Bookstore
1351 Westwood Blvd.

Long Beach

Soujourner Bookstore
538 Redondo Ave.

Nationally: *The Lesbian Tide* is sold at most major feminist, gay, and lesbian bookstores, and centers. If your local store or center does not carry us, have them write for bulk rates and copies.

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THE TIDE COLLECTIVE,

c/o The Woman's Building

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(213) 839-7254

LETTERS continued from page 19

Dear Sisters,

I am here beginning a verbal meditation upon the present situation at Another Dementia, the residence of Sisters of Diana, Inc. A wilderness forest of sixty-eight acres with bugs chirping, birds humming, songs of winds cooling my head . . . as the sun goes down rose and lavender in the sky.

A most obvious womanifestation of nature's processes reveals herself in incredible contrasts. The grounding earth's vibrations centering me deep into exploration of my selves vs. the erratic panic of intrusion that comes over the gate only too often still. The sages say be watchful at all times: on guard against what is not yet in sight and on alert for what is not yet in hearing. We certainly were unprepared for the totally unexpected harassment we met when, as we later discovered, rumors were circulating amongst the local townspeople that Sisters of Diana, Inc., was: a nudist colony, devil worshipers, or a hippy commune; pick one. We heard a rumor that the local sheriff went to trial and got off after raping a woman prisoner in the jail. They also say that eleven or seventeen prominent women in town testified behind closed doors against him. He's running for re-election.

There were many reasons, after careful study and consideration, for Sisters of Diana to choose southern Oklahoma as a homesite. The midwestern location gives access to and from the coasts and the centralness acts as a buffer from uranic tension from cities in the panic of today's realizations. The panic here is from the boogymen of yesterday. Coming and going. This is the capital of the Chickasaw Indian nation who told time by the phases of the moon. The tribal elders "harboring their superstitions and resisting change vs. the contemporary young native americans who are trying to update their lives and culture is no new story around here.

Sisters of Diana are enlisting support from our friends and sisters who recognize us and know what we're doing.

So if anyone reads this who may be remotely interested in investing some energy in any form in the beginning of a creative enterprising solution to our present day problems, please write or come and visit. If you have suggestions, questions or encouragement, please write, enclosed in a (security precaution) brown wrapper to: Sisters of Diana, Inc., another dementia - route 1 box 42 - A, Tishomingo, OK 73460. If you want to retaliate against our immediate oppressors, send us an official postcard telling us we have excellent credit with your company or some such. If you have access to an excess of goods or funds, Sisters of Diana, Inc. will sign with you loan contracts which may (as an option) be signed over to tax-deductable donations when we become incorporated.

If anyone knows of a sister lawyer who can incorporate us faster than ours is, please have her contact us right away. If anyone knows how to patent products, please send us the info so we can patent venus oregano's all purpose non-toxic organic very effective bug repellent before the local pharmacist

(or whoever) where we buy our witch hazel steals our recipe and makes a fortune on it.

Of course we will welcome any sister to membership if they are interested in a rustic wilderness and inexpensive vacation and/or life. To stay here, one must become a member of Sisters of Diana, Inc., which costs a one-time fee of \$5.00, sign our membership terms which are designed to protect us all, and be recommended by someone who is already a member and introduced to and welcomed by the present council in residence in the community. All this formality can be viewed as a cultural ritual and is intended to help keep all participants always informed of everything that may affect their lives. We have just begun this venture and proceed intuitively so we can not claim to have it all worked out or set up in any final form yet. That's why we need feedback and other perspectives so desperately to be sure we are proceeding according to the proper rhythm of cyclic unfoldment. In fact, we hope to create an arrangement which will adapt to changing needs and realities as it grows of its own accord.

in her image,

myra quadrigayle

ps - the electric company is trying to make us pay \$2000 prepayment before they will put in electricity

Dear Sisters,

I had just begun to sing my second song at the Michigan Women's Music Festival when I noticed E K Waller looking up at me. Now that's nothing unusual; after all she's been photographing me and my sisters for quite some time now. Take a look through past *Lesbian Tides* or *West Coast Sister*. How about that great promo photo of Meg, Holly, Cris, and Margie doing the "Women on Wheels concert?"

E K has been photographing our movement for two years. Something struck me as quite wrong with the picture I was seeing. She was just looking. I found out why after sharing my music. On her way out to Michigan the van she was riding in caught on fire. All of her equipment went up in smoke. I know E K doesn't have the money to replace her cameras, enlarger, paper, film, etc. If we all could donate something: money, maybe some equipment, and send it to E K in care of *The Lesbian Tide*, she'd be back clicking in no time. Thanks for your time.

Love in music, sisterhood and dyke pride,

Maxine Feldman

Atthis Productions

Sunset Maine

(Editorial Note: The staff of *The Lesbian Tide* has already offered to help E K, our long time photographer, raise funds. We have received checks from women across the country for E K and will continue to do so. Please send to E K Waller, c/o *The Lesbian Tide*, to our address on the inside front cover.)

NATIONAL NEWS

Dykes Out Front for Carter

The 51.3% Committee for Carter/Mondale announced today that three major figures in the lesbian-feminist movement, Massachusetts State Representative Elaine Noble; Jean O'Leary of New York, co-executive director of the National Gay Task Force; and Jo Daly, gay community liaison to the San Francisco Human Rights Commission; were appointed to the National Advisory Committee of the 51.3% Committee. Daly and O'Leary were delegates to the 1976 Democratic National Convention.

The purpose of the 51.3% Committee is to appeal to a broad spectrum of women through increasing their awareness as voters and participants in the electoral process, and by highlighting the contributions of women to the Carter/Mondale campaign. The Committee serves as a point of reference for the concerns of women as they relate to policy, issues and planning in the campaign, and will search out qualified women to serve in a future administration.

Lesbian Wave Remains

The Bureau of Navy Personnel in Washington has overturned the recommended discharge of a Wave who was accused of having a lesbian relationship, the *Chicago Gay Life* reports. Wave Petty Officer Patricia Veldon was accused of "homosexual tendencies" by an administrative board at the Key West Naval Air Station. The administrative board recommended that she be given an honorable discharge.

Meanwhile, the woman with whom Veldon supposedly had a relationship, Airman first class Carmen Banos, was discharged from the Air Force.

Carol Scott, who is Veldon's attorney, stated that her client's victory is largely due to a recent ruling by the Secretary of the Navy that discharge for gay servicepeople is not mandatory. Discharges, according to new Navy policy, should be decided on a case-to-case basis.

Reprinted, Gay Community News

Colorful Silkscreened
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TV Admits Family Hour Exclusion

The House of Representatives Subcommittee on Communications held hearings in Los Angeles recently on the television "family viewing" controversy, and for the first time in the Committee's history, representatives of the gay community were invited to testify. They were Ginny Vida, media director of the National Gay Task Force, and Dr. Newton Deiter, coordinator of the Gay Media Task Force in Hollywood.

Vida told the subcommittee that "Just as it was immoral to foster prejudice and discrimination by pretending to the children of America that there were no black people, no real people who were Jews, Mexicans, or Poles, it is immoral to foster prejudice and discrimination by pretending to the children of America that there are no real people who are gay . . . We think it is not only immoral but illegal for the television industry, mandated to serve the needs of all the public, to fail to serve *our* needs . . . And I believe that neither I, nor any of my gay brothers and sisters of all ages, should be required to wait a single moment for fairness and *visibility* from this nation's communications industry."

The reason for the exclusion of gays from family viewing, Vida suggested, is that parents equate homosexuality with violence and sex. Part of the reason for the violence notion, she said, are violent portrayals of gays in "adult" viewing hours.

Deiter, who works directly with producers of television series, stressed the fact that gay themes are taboo on the "family hour" even though the networks have offered gay organizations assurances to the contrary. And, at the hearings, he was supported in his view by testimony from Alan Burns, of Mary Tyler Moore Productions, and Kathy Nolan, president of the Screen Actors Guild, both of whom expressed the view that there is an unwritten exclusionary policy.

N.O.W.

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No Abortions for Welfare Women

In early October, the House and Senate overrode President Ford's veto of a controversial HEW bill which now provides money for jobs. However, sandwiched in this bill which is now law, is the Hyde Amendment, a rider which forbids federal monies to be used for abortions. The effect of this legislation is to prohibit the use of federal Medi-Cal monies for abortion. The effect is that poor and welfare women on Medi-Cal may no longer receive abortions. Feminists

ist abortion fighters are fighting back. The day the legislation passed challenges to the constitutionality of the Hyde amendment were made in New York and Washington, D.C. According to the Feminist Women's Health Center, both challenges have been temporarily upheld by restraining order. Judge John Sirica (of Watergate fame), who heard the case in New York, interpreted that the restraining order has national jurisdiction. Additionally, the ACLU and other northern class organizations are building toward similar challenges, including a possible class action suit brought by welfare women who have been denied abortion because of the new law. The constitutionality is being challenged because the new law in effect makes one law for the poor (no abortions) and one for the rich, and discriminates on the basis of poverty.

Southern California feminist clinics, led by the Los Angeles Feminist Women's Health Center, have banded together to guarantee abortions for all women despite the Hyde Amendment. The L.A. feminist clinics are also looking toward legal moves. For further information contact, Suzanne Gage, FWHC (213) 936-6293, or write: FWHC, 1112 Crenshaw Blvd., L.A. CA 90019.

Lesbian Communications and Contacts

For introductions between Sisters
Write to: **THE LEAGUE**,
Box 2143LT, Darien, Conn. 06820
203-359-3141 (10-4)

A Year in Jail for Trespassing!

Chicago — A Chicago judge has ordered gay marriage advocates Toby Schneider and Nancy Davis to spend a year in jail after a jury convicted them of criminal trespass. The August trial grew out of an action in which the two lesbians remained in the County Clerk's Office past closing time, claiming that the clerk's business was not finished because they had been refused a marriage license. Many gay activists in Chicago considered the judge's decision to be "unnecessarily harsh." Schneider and Davis, who have already spent 150 days in jail, will serve out their time at the Women's House of Corrections in Chicago.

Defense Fund Honors Noble

Lambda Legal Defense & Education Fund, Inc. announced today that Representative Elaine Noble of the Massachusetts' State Legislature would receive its first annual award. The Lambda Award is given in recognition of a significant contribution to securing the civil rights of homosexuals.

Lambda was incorporated in October of 1973 as a charitable corporation under the laws of the State of New York to help secure the civil rights of gay people by providing legal services in those matters likely to be of significance to gay people as a group, either directly or through the force of precedent.

To date Lambda has formally appeared in thirteen matters, including, among others, cases dealing with the custody and visitation rights of gay parents, the validity of anti-gay immigration and naturalization policies and the rights of gay people who are members of the armed forces.

Representative Noble was the first openly gay person to be elected to a State Legislature, and she has become a nationally prominent advocate on behalf of gay civil rights.

For further information contact William J. Thom at 212-758-1905, or write Lambda Legal Defense and Education Fund, Inc., P.O. Box 5448, Grand Central Station, New York, NY 10017.

The Wishing Well®

...a national publication with emphasis on assisting gay/feminists locate and communicate with women of similar interests, needs and objectives. Code numbers used to insure confidentiality. Membership information upon request.



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UNIVERSITY PROFS. SUPPORT GAY COLLEAGUES

At its annual meeting in Santa Barbara this June, the American Association of University Professors voted to oppose discrimination by colleges and universities on the basis of "sexual or affectional preference." This action commits the Association to defend the rights of gay academics, including censure of offending institutions where necessary.

AAUP is the largest and most influential of the organizations representing university professors. It is also usually considered to be the most conservative, and it is the last of the national organizations to recognize gay rights. The National Education Association and the American Federation of Teachers adopted such policies several years ago; The United Federation of Teachers did so this year.

Dr. Walter Sheppe of the University of Akron in Ohio, who originally proposed this action, believed that this may be the most important action yet to secure full rights for gay women and men on campus. "American universities are in a period of transition between the total exclusion and open acceptance of known homosexuals." The next major step is to have gay rights included in collective bargaining agreements."

Lesbians Sue

Three lesbian former employees of the University of Texas in Austin said in early June that they will file sex discrimination suits against the university because of harassment that they say forced them to quit. The three former groundskeepers say they felt victim of "excessive supervision" and open hostility because of their homosexuality. They say their Equal Opportunity Employment Commission complaints, however, will deal only with sex discrimination.

GAY LOBBY RAISES \$5,000

Nearly \$5,000 has been raised by the newly-formed Gay Rights National Lobby to finance its drive to end discrimination against gay people through government action.

"Thus far nearly \$5,000 has been raised to finance the new gay office in Washington," said NGTF.

"It is hoped that a full staff will be functioning by mid-January of 1977 for the opening of the 95th Congress."

GRNL is open to those interested in the rights of gay people. It costs \$15 for a regular membership, but there is no charge for gay people who cannot afford the cost. However, requests for free memberships have to receive approval of the board.

The national lobby was formed earlier this year following a meeting in Chicago of nearly 100 gay rights leaders from across the country.

Additional information on the Gay Rights National Lobby can be obtained by writing Adam DeBaugh at Suite 210, 110 Maryland Ave. N.E., Washington, D.C. 20002.

(Newsweek)


Suit Against Ms. Dropped

A \$1.7 million dollar lawsuit, brought by Elizabeth Forsling Harris (former investor) against *Ms* Magazine and two of its officers (Gloria Steinem, Patricia Carbine) has been thrown out of court by a permanent and final order of dismissal.

The Harris complaint, filed in June 1975, had alleged that Ms. Harris was induced to sell back a majority of her *Ms* Magazine stock by false statement and concealment of fact. Harris's complaint was dismissed because of her repeated neglect of the judge's order directing her to appear to answer questions under oath posed by the lawyers for *Ms* Magazine.

In their answer to the Harris complaint, *Ms* Magazine stated, "by reason of personal kindness and pity," Ms. Harris's stock was re-purchased on her departure in 1972 at a far higher price than that required by an existing contract.

Ms has countercharged alleging that the Harris complaint "was brought maliciously by Harris with the intention and for the purpose of causing dissemination of false and libelous information about the defendants." No date has been set by the Court for the trials of the counterclaims against Ms. Harris.



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THE MOTHERS:

Precedent Breakthru May Be on the Way

The National Gay Task Force has announced that it will cooperate with a research project funded by the National Institute for Mental Health (NIMH) which concerns lesbian mothers and their children. Researchers with the Long Island Institute and the Department of Psychiatry, SUNY at Stony Brook, hope to gather data which will be relevant to lesbian mothers in child custody hearings. The study will compare lesbian and non-gay mothers and their children's adjustments to living in a family where no adult male is present. The sample will include families from rural as well as urban areas, in the North and South, so that the participants' adjustment under a variety of community standards can be seen. Data from this study will later be compared with studies in which men were present in the home setting.

The reason for NGTF cooperation, according to Jean O'Leary and Bruce Voeller, co-executive directors, is that the project could be politically valuable in child custody cases. No such comparative studies exist, and women involved in legal action must rely on the testimony of "expert witnesses" in the field of sex research. Although this has sometimes been helpful, it has also been disregarded by judges. "This research study," O'Leary stated, "might provide data which would put to rest the concern of some courts that lesbianism makes a woman an unfit mother."

Jane Mandel, research scientist for the Long Island Institute, and Dr. Mary Hotvedt, post-doctoral fellow with the Department of Psychiatry at SUNY at Stony Brook, will be conducting the interviews with mothers and children. Both women have been involved in sex research and teaching as well as in feminist groups. Richard Green, M.D., Professor of Psychiatry and Psychology at SUNY at Stony Brook is co-investigator. He has testified on behalf of lesbian mothers in numerous custody cases.

The researchers are seeking women who describe themselves as lesbians and have at least one child living with them who is ten years old or younger. The

mother and children should have lived as a family unit for at least two years with no adult males (18 or older) in the house. However, other adult women may live with the family.

The interviews, about two hours in length for the mother and each child, will be arranged by appointment for convenient times and locations. All information will be kept confidential. Women interested in participating or finding out more about the study should write to Jane Mandel or Mary Hotvedt c/o Long Island Research Institute, Central Islip, NY 11722; or call collect to Mary Hotvedt at (516) 444-2429. Women in the midwest can call Jane Mandel at (312) 475-4773.

Mother Wins in Court, Loses to Poverty

Dear Sisters,

Jodi (my mate) and I are grateful for the support — both financial and emotional — we have received from those who responded to our crisis.

We do find ourselves, however, in very serious financial difficulties because of our recent court battle. Namely the following:

1. My antique business has disintegrated.
2. I have been diligently seeking employment but thus far have not been able to find anything (I guess my name is well-remembered).

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WOMEN ON WHEELS, P.O. BOX 5343, SANTA MONICA 90405



3. My attorney Kim Matthews is beginning to feel like she has been taken advantage since her balance is still \$748.70. She even paid for Dr. Heath's psychiatric evaluation (\$102.50) out of her pocket.

4. We may have to give up our farm.

5. Our phone has been disconnected.

We realize that the above matters are our responsibility, but we are totally unable to do anything currently to resolve these circumstances. Though we have won a tremendous victory we are suffering from the costs of the undertaking.

I plead with you to implore your readers to help defray Ms. Matthews's legal fee. If gay people all over would send \$.50 the burden would be eased completely. We would be so grateful for any help Contributions can be sent to:

1. Carol Whitehead Defense Fund, P.O. Box 4542, Portland, Maine 04112.

2. Carol Whitehead, P.O. Box 483, North Berwick, Maine 03906.

3. Kim Matthews, Attorney-at-Law, 28 Pearl St., Portland, Maine 04111.

We have received about \$200 to date. One of our witnesses from Atlanta, Georgia cost \$250 alone.

No matter what the size of the contribution, please help us by sharing the expense of this landmark decision. We will forever be indebted.

In addition, if any organization or group would like me to speak regarding my experiences in this custody case, I would be only happy to oblige. It is my desire to see all gay people everywhere given the full rights we were supposed to have been born with.

In struggle,

Carol Whitehead
North Berwick, Maine

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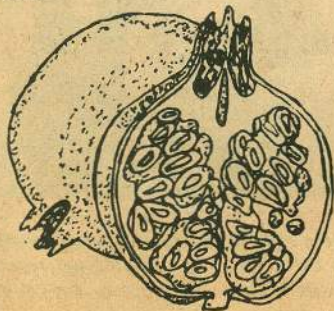
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Lesbianism "Harmful"

In New York recently, a judge transferred custody of a 4 year old girl from her mother to her father, saying that a woman has a right to be a Lesbian but a Lesbian does not have the right to raise children. Expert psychiatric testimony was presented for the defense that the child is not aware of the mother's Lesbianism and that even if she were it would not be harmful to her. The judge held that the child was emotionally disturbed because the mother was a Lesbian.

The mother, who wishes to remain anonymous, has been prohibited from visitation rights as long as known homosexuals are present, and from involving the child in any publicity. The case has been appealed—contributions or support can be sent to: "Custody Case," GCAS, Box 57, Elmwood Station, Syracuse, NY 13207.

— CWSS Bussetin

Custody Victory

The Washington, D.C. City Council has passed, in somewhat watered-down form, a bill protecting gay parents from automatically losing custody or visitation rights to their children during divorce settlements. The bill, passed on June 22, states that "sexual orientation, in and of itself, of a party shall not be a conclusive consideration" in matters of custody and visitation. Addition of the phrase "in and of itself" and "conclusive" drew criticism from some of the bill's supporters. However, there was some dispute as to how much the amending phrases really weakened the bill. Frank Kameny, Washington gay activist, asserted that the bill was still "75 to 95%" intact. The bill must still be approved by Mayor Washington and scrutinized by the U.S. Congress to see if there is any objection.

(Gay Community News)

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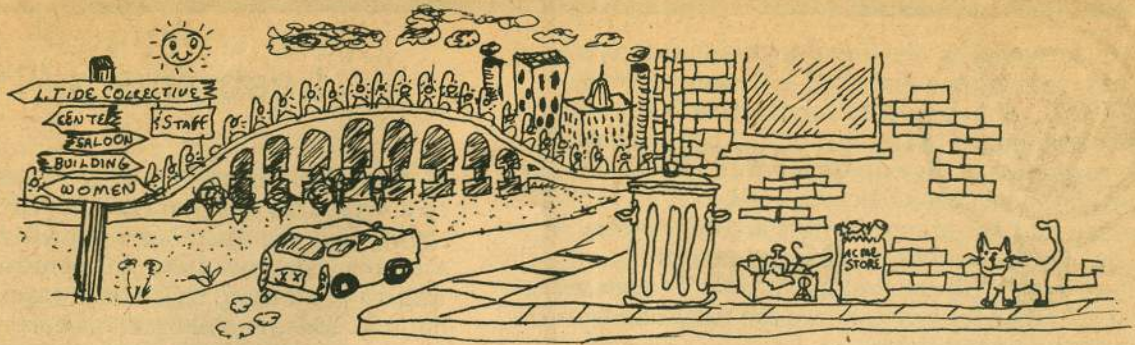
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COMMUNITY FOCUS



SISTER RESUMES PUBLICATION

The fundraising dance for *Sister Newspaper* held October 9 at the Woman's Building netted enough money for *Sister* to resume publication on a bi-monthly basis beginning December 1. There will be a theme for each issue, starting with the State of the Movement. The new *Sister* promises to be bigger and better, with columns, reviews, cartoons, crossword puzzles and a swap section.

WOMEN'S CENTER RE-ORGANIZES

An influx of new women and new energy have begun to revitalise the Women's Center at 237 Hill Street in Santa Monica. Meetings are being held every Saturday at the Center at 11:00 for any women interested in planning the Center's future. Plans so far include an extensive cleaning and painting of the Center, new furniture, a switchboard for referrals, regular staffing hours, CR groups, radical therapy, Fat Liberation, social events and workshops and of course the ever popular fundraiser. The Women's Center is open to all women and its politics will be determined by those women who use the Center. For more information call Robin at 820-3472 or leave a message 24 hours at 399-9220.

CALIFORNIA POETS

Merlin Press is accepting contributions to an anthology of the work of contemporary California women poets which is to be published in spring, 1977. We welcome the work of both published and unpublished poets. We have a particular interest in work which sets forth women's unique experiences and perspectives, but all types of material are welcome.

Rules governing the submission of material are as follows:

1. Only unpublished material may be submitted.
2. Poems must be typed.
3. A maximum of ten poems may be submitted.
4. The poet must be both a woman and a resident of California.
5. A stamped, self-addressed envelope must be enclosed for return of unused material.
6. Poems must be submitted no later than January 15, 1977.

Address manuscripts to MERLIN PRESS
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CALIFIA LAND PROJECT

One outcome of the Califia Community (see *Tide*, Sept./Oct. '76) is the Malibu/Califia Land Management Collective, a group of women who have purchased some land in Malibu. They want the space to be used for an educational conference and healing center for women. Input from individuals or groups about how to set up and utilize the land is welcomed. There will also be a community reunion on November 7 at which the Collective's plans for the land will be presented to the community. Ideas or suggestions can be brought to the reunion or mailed to Judy Freespirit at 975 Indiana Ave., Venice, CA 90291.

LA GAY TEACHERS UNITE

Nearly 30 teachers from Greater Los Angeles have joined the newly organized Gay Teachers of Los Angeles. Gay Teachers of Los Angeles is a group of teachers who find it increasingly important to integrate the awareness of their gayness with their roles as teachers.

People wanting to know more about GTLA should either call (213) 980-2070 in Los Angeles or write to 11717 Victory Blvd., North Hollywood, CA 91606.



After a culturally sparse summer, the L.A. community mainlines the energy of Olivia Records artists, Teresa Trull and Meg Christian. They were joined by Holly Near and new talent Linda Tillery.

Photo by E K Waller



the correct line

Alcoholism Center for Women	381-7805
Feminist Women's Health Center	936-6293
Westside Women's Health Clinic	450-2191
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Los Angeles Rape Crisis Hotline	677-8116

Westside Women's Center (eves.)	399-9512
Woman's Building	221-6161
N.O.W. Los Angeles Chapter	655-3332
N.O.W. Hollywood Chapter	654-8340
Echo Park People's Law Collective	485-0506
Problem-solving contact raps	
Contact person — Karen Sandler	396-9956
Orange County Gay Community Center	714-534-3261

Lesbian Tide	839-7254
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The series will commence in February thru June. Admission will be \$4.00 per concert, but for those of you who would like to take advantage of our special discount, you can get a series ticket now for only \$17.50. Send your orders to WOMEN ON WHEELS, P.O. Box 5343, Santa Monica, 90405, or buy them at our Dec. 17th Concert with the Berkeley Women's Music Collective (see ad, this issue) at Fritchman Auditorium, 8th and Vermont, Los Angeles.

Give a gift to yourself, your loved ones, your mother, your lover, or your lovee.

Thank you and now back to the movie!



Sharing films and resources at the Women's Health and Healing Conference.

Photo by E K Waller

HEALTH CONFERENCE SPREADS GOOD MEDICINE

L.A.'s first feminist health conference, WOMEN'S HEALTH AND HEALING, went down as smoothly as a healthy avocado sandwich! 200 health-concerned feminists showed up at Los Angeles City College October 8 - 11 and helped make the event a political and educational success. Many months of planning on the part of staff women of the Herself and Westside Women's clinics paid off in providing some forty workshops and panels to the conference attendees. At the weekend's close, participants congratulated organizers on an excellently planned conference; specifically cited were the variety and scheduling of workshops (everything from "A Socialist Feminist Perspective on Health" to "Biofeedback"), program content, and conference staffing. The only serious problem was financial. Expecting 300 participants, the Conference organizers fell about \$1200 short of the \$5,200 needed to break even. Sympathetic workshop leaders who were stipended for their workshops, saved the day however by turning back their honorariums. Participants also donated, above registration costs, some \$300, and according to Conference organizers, "we paid all the bills . . . barely . . . but they're paid!" Numerous action groups, such as artificial insemination programs, as well as many contacts resulted from the three day sessions. Tapes of highlight workshops are available. Write: The Westside Women's Clinic, 1711 Ocean Park Blvd., Santa Monica, CA 90405.

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COMMUNITY FOCUS

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NORTHRIDGE CENTER

We of the Women's center at California State University, Northridge, would like to offer you the opportunity to show your support and help throughout the upcoming year. We have recently re-located to the Life House (9500 Etiwanda).

We will be sponsoring an auto-maintenance class, an assertion-training class, consciousness raising groups, and coffee nights which are open to everyone. We do, however, have some classes/groups which are open strictly to campus and community women (i.e. the lesbian rap group and the self-help class). Our lending library is constantly growing and we are in dire need of both new and used books (donations gladly accepted). We also have a referral service (which includes medical aid, legal aid, and job opportunities) and an information center (birth control, divorce laws) which are available to the public.

We accept donations for any services rendered by the Center, but we do not insist.

If you have any further questions, pertaining to any of our services, please don't hesitate to call (886-8085 or 885-2780) or come by and visit. We are open Monday through Friday from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. If you are interested in volunteering, there is plenty to be done.

ALCOHOLISM CENTER FOR WOMEN PLANS EVENTS

The Alcoholism Center for Women, 1147 S. Alvarado, Los Angeles, will be having a series of Lesbian Raps facilitated by Branda Weathers and including films. Discussion will cover lesbian history, role-playing and our oppression. The raps begin at 7:30 p.m. on December 3rd, 10th and 17th. A.C.W. also has open drop-in rap groups on Monday and Wednesday from 1:00 to 2:00. A.C.W. will also have a Las Vegas Night fundraiser on November 13 at 7:30. Tickets for the event are \$3 to \$5. On Thanksgiving Day, Nov. 25, there will be an Open House beginning at noon. On Dec. 12 there is a Christmas Caroling and Tree Decorating Party. A.C.W. will have an Open House on Christmas Day beginning at noon. On New Year's Eve there will be a dance starting at 7:30.

For more information call A.C.W. at 381-7805.

LESBIAN RAPS AND CLINIC

Every Tuesday and Thursday evening from 8 to 10 Women's Raps are held at the Gay Community Services Center at 1213 N. Highland Avenue in Los Angeles. A Women's Clinic also operates at G.C.S.C. on Thursday evenings from 8 to 10 by appointment. The Lesbian Resource Center at G.C.S.C. has received funding from the county which will enable them to keep a phone line open to do referrals. The number is 464-7400 extension 32, and feminist businesses and other women offering services to lesbian women in the community are asked to call if they wish to receive referrals from G.C.S.C. The Lesbian Resource Center will have more extensive activities starting in November. Call the Center for more details.

UCLA WANTS LESBIAN FILMS

During the winter of 1977 UCLA will be having its annual Gay Awareness Week. One of the things that we plan to include this year is a lesbian/gay film festival, featuring films by and about lesbian women and gay men.

We are very much interested in your participation in this event. Please send us information on films that would be appropriate. We especially seek your assistance in finding films dealing with non-white lesbians and gays.

Thank you.

UCLA Gay Students Union

HISTORIC DECISION: JOB GRANT (\$305,250) AWARDED TO GAY CENTER

Ignoring predictions of fire and brimstone raining down on the city, not to mention imminent earthquakes, the Los Angeles City Council on August 24 approved a Comprehensive Employment Training Act grant to the Gay Community Services Center for \$305,250.

The grant, part of a \$27 million CETA program for 64 local agencies, will provide funding for approximately 75 gay men and women during the next year. The grant takes effect October 1, 1976, and will provide job training and work experience for chronically unemployed and underemployed gay men and women who live within the Hollywood district served by the grant.

The majority approval by the council marked the first time in city history that funding was provided for a gay agency. The county Board of Supervisors has been the chief source of local public funding until now.

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REVIEWS

Dark Ages of Girlhood

The Opoponax, Monique Wittig, Daughters, Inc. 1976

by Cindy Frazier

Monique Wittig's first novel, *The Opoponax*, was originally published in 1966, and now Daughters, Inc., has republished it. It is a densely written, very detailed monologue about a young French girl in a Catholic boarding school.

Wittig won an award for the book, and it seems to have been reissued as a primitive feminist tract, a tale of survival from the dark ages of girlhood. On the back cover it is stated that the major character, Catherine Legrand, is "a budding guerillere" and "beats up attackers and carries a knife in an open palm." This is quite an overstatement, as the best parts of the book are not at all about violent feminist defense. In fact, such violence takes place in only one scene — when Catherine is tricked by a boy into getting a face-full of brambles and pursues him. She is not the feminist rebel-punk that she is made out to be in the liner notes.

The book has no Gothic and barely any radical political import. It is written in a sparse, objective style, giving it an almost clinical cast. Most of it takes place in school or on the playground with playmates and Catherine's lover, Valerie Borge. Rather than being about a "rebel" this novel is about female bonding, and in that way is a profound and daring feminist statement — especially when we consider that it was written ten years ago. (The Opoponax itself is a mysterious character that Catherine Legrand creates in order to fascinate and eventually win Valerie Borge. After the two become best friends, the Opoponax does not appear again.)

One of the novel's greatest strengths is its subtlety. It builds absolutely without momentum, rather like a Jane Austen novel, circling in a not-quite-child's voice, drawing slowly and deliberately the thread of the story to a climax that is nothing less than sublime nostalgia. Wittig seems to be very much a descendant of Colette, detailing nature and the natural doings of children with shining simplicity. She makes you long for the pain and beauty of romping through blackberry bushes, stealing fruit, going to the funeral of a friend's mother. Ultimately, this book is not so much a novel as a memoir, through which Wittig apparently discovered her true subject matter — women in groups.



Photo by Debbie Snow

Seekers of the Elephant

To See the Elephant, a play written by Elizabeth Clark and directed by Liebe Gray depicts the stumbling courage and growing closeness of five women who blaze their way westward in 1876. The self-proclaimed "Daughters of Diana" moved from aspiring actresses to veritable pioneers in this refreshingly different tale of American women in the old west.

The play was performed at the Odyssey Theater by standing l. to r.: Rebecca Taylor, Terri Carson, Chris Williamson, Kit McDonough, Gwynne Gilford. Seated: Nancy Stephens.



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Be Be K' Roche:

They Got the Music, We Got the Rhythm

Review: Be Be K'Roche (Women's Band).
Olivia Records. October 1976.

by Rogi A. Rubyfruit

So, you say you get self-conscious at parties when everybody gets up and dances to Average White Band. No wonder — they're average, white, and male. You say you need at least three drinks and maybe a couple of joints to get up there and just humbly move around the floor, tripping in the carpet and bumping into furniture. Well, sneak over to the record box and slip on Be Be K'Roche, side one, first cut.

"Hoodoo'd" comes on slow, like a Jamaican mission choir and erupts into bumping bass and sizzling treble: Let the beat touch your pelvis; let the clapping reach your third eye, and focus your energy between these two points. Don't think about moving; it all comes naturally — when you've been Hoodoo'd.

Be Be K'Roche is that unheard of element in male music industries: a good women's band. And

now you get to listen to them. Olivia Records has just produced their first album, "Be Be K'Roche." And if you don't get ahold of it, just because you might not have heard of them — well, it's not nice to call sisters names, but it would be a big mistake. Olivia has produced the cleanest sounding album yet, and the sound is fine.

Don't expect any big political statements in this one, though. Strong verbal statements and fast beat don't mix well. Lyrically, Be Be K'Roche is definitely understated. But musically, the strength and the power really come through.

Take "Gotta Make Something Of My Life"; The hot, slow rhythm is Gauguin's rainforest, with two mango-breasted women* conferring about their determination to make something of their lives. The painting fragments and gives way to sharp, city-light sounds and a proud, brown woman with flashing teeth dancing through cigarette smoke and buzzing blacklight. Then it slows back into the rain — and the two bronze women smile in recognition at each other. You make what you take.

Then slide around the floor with your one-and-only, even if she's only there for the length of "Strong and Free." It doesn't matter, you see — this is a very soft (and subtly, sleazy) love song, for any woman. Light piano, mellow voices: this song spills like warm, red wine from a silver chalice. It could go on twice as long, and still leave the two of you wanting more.

If you want something a little heavier, there's "I've Got the Rhythm." Anthropologists for centuries have written volumes of hypotheses about the cyclic

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THEY WILL KNOW ME BY MY TEETH



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REVIEWS

the passion of the wicca

by Cheri Lesh

Watching a rehearsal of Z Budapest's *The Woman's Passion Play* made me cling more fervently than ever to the theory that Wicca is derived from the root words "wisdom" and "wit." Both abound in this charming Morality Play which is rich in passion born in past pain but culminating in hope and the promise of ecstasy. Being familiar with some of the products of Z's literally divine inspirations, I expected the literary quality of the play to be high. I was also pleasantly surprised at the consistently fine quality of acting. Each member of the cast brought authenticity and sparkle to her character.

The *Passion Play* begins with the entrance of the three weird sisters, the Fates; Aleto, Tisephone and Megeara. These crones, played by Helen Beardwoman, Arlene Waller and Live Oak Woman descend shrieking like Valkyries and cackling like refugees from *Macbeth*. They circle the cauldron with demoniacal clamor until Megeara, the oldest crone, suddenly declares with disgust, "I am not going to do this hideous Halloween act anymore! I am not going to cackle and hoot . . . I can't stand this role playing!" She is soothed by Tisephone and Aleto, and the three get down to the business of the New Year. The scene where the Triple Fates ponder over their New Year's correspondance, which showers down upon them complete with envelopes, is priceless. The



Photo: by E K Waller

After the witches liberate the virgin, the historical male gods; l. to r. Mohammed (Janet Roslund), J.C. (Susan Nestor), and Hare Krishna (Linda Barrone), try to clone their new male god themselves.

mail these days asks for justice, revolution, and the destruction of evil.

With the theme of revolution established, the Fates turn their energy to the conjuration of the Nymph of '77. Sassy Wind plays the phoenix-child with flaming wings, a delicate, dancing balance between wisdom and innocence. In order to prepare her for her stay on earth, the Fates introduce the Nymph to three vital foremothers: Amelia Earhart, Emmeline Pankhurst, and Sojourner Truth. There is a breath-taking moment when Amelia Earhart is speaking and the Nymph is poised like an airplane in flight that carries the audience above the clouds. Sojourner Truth's famous, "Ain't I a Woman" speech brought chills and tears. Not until curtain call does the viewer realize that the woman playing Sojourner is tiny, five feet tall. In real life Sojourner Truth was six feet. Syl Booth plays her as if she were seven.

But all is not peaches and ether on the astral plane. The veil is agitated, male thought forms intrude. J.C. (Judea Christian), Mohammed and Hare Krishna strut on stage. These characters embody the essence of each of the three religions they represent. Hare is a saffron swirl, clanking his bells, chanting and twirling like a demented top. Mohammed is the



Photo: by E K Waller

The Fates, l. to r. ; Tisephone (Live Oak Woman), Megeara (Arlene Waller), and Aleto (Helen Beardwoman) summon the Nymph of '77.

restrained type, a little too likeable for my taste. At the performance I attended, J.C. wore denim overalls and looked just a tad like a certain peanut farmer. I will not reveal all the surprises the Fates prepare for these three jokers. Suffice it to say that the results are a blend of merriment and vengeance.

At last the Virgin-in-Chains leaves her chains to rust in the manger: Bedazzled by her rescue by the Fates, the Virgin is bewildered by her freedom. Sheathed in a bridal dress and veil, looking fresh off a sugar saturated wedding cake, she is a prime candidate for Women's Liberation:

Tisephone: Do you think we should enroll her in CR?

Megeara: How long have you been in chains dear?

Tisephone: That's enough CR for anybody!

The Fates decide that all the Virgin needs is a little exercise in freedom of choice. Enter Colette, your basic suave, debonair, dyke, reeking with gallic charm. The hot, lyrical seduction scene which transpires between Colette and the shy virgin is worth the price of admission. It also is a treat to see Susan B. Anthony and Elizabeth Cady Stanton evoked in the performances of Cherie Matisse and Judy Freespirit. Matisse and Freespirit play well together, point and counterpoint, exactly as one imagines Anthony and Stanton exchanged chidings and wisdom 200 years ago. I am convinced that Freespirit's interpretation of Stanton is due to the miracles of reincarnation. A fine talent.

It's hard to criticize inspiration, but I did question if the villains are too absurd to be threatening, portrayed as clowns rather than tyrants. I would like to have seen them taken a little more seriously. Five thousand years of female anguish is no small thing. Yet, perhaps it is a sign of strength and confidence when we can afford to treat them as comic rather than cosmic figures. The Woman's Passion Play is beautiful and passionate.

Old Testament of Lesbian Courage

A REVIEW: SEX VARIANT WOMEN IN LITERATURE, Jeannette Foster, Diana Press

by Joy Fisher

Sex Variant Women in Literature is not light reading. Its avowed purpose is "to trace historically the quantity and temper of imaginative writing on its chosen subject from earliest times to the present day." It's heavy. It's concentrated. A little goes a long way.

It's also an awesome accomplishment by a dedicated and courageous woman.

On her own time she tracked down and read fiction, drama and poetry in English, French and German which contained references to "sex variant" women — that is, women having "emotional relations" to other women. The result of her research was this pioneering survey in the field of Lesbian literature, starting with Sappho and the Biblical story of Ruth

and continuing more or less chronologically through 1955. In a total of 354 pages of narrative, the book summarizes and critiques some 324 works of literature. A bibliography of the primary material, another of reference works consulted, and an extensive index add approximately 70 more pages to the book and are great aids to the reader searching for information about a particular title.

The first printing was limited and copies soon became unavailable, but not before one reached Gene Damon, who was to become editor of *The Ladder* and a co-editor of *The Lesbian in Literature, a Bibliography*, a book which augments but does not duplicate Dr. Foster's work.

In July, 1974, Dr. Foster was presented the Third Annual Gay Book Award by the Task Force on Gay Liberation of the American Library Association, and, largely through that group, republication of her book was arranged with Diana Press. That edition became available this summer.

Sex Variant Women in Literature has been called the "Bible of Lesbian Literature." Like a Bible, it's meant to be dipped into again and again. Unfortunately, the new edition appears not to be sturdy enough to withstand that kind of repeated use. I grant you, I took my copy on a camping trip; nevertheless, I treated it as respectfully as it deserved — and yet, several pages have already come unstuck from the binding.

There are some irritating factors about the book attributable to the author, as well. One of these is the failure to provide translations for the extensive quotations of French and German literature. Learning that Dr. Foster thinks Renee Vivien may have been a latter-day Sappho, I was eager to read that French-speaking writer's poetry. Although it is quoted at length by Dr. Foster, I could not understand a word of it. It was all in French. I studied Spanish, alas.

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Be Be K' Roche

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nature of female rhythms. But when this song winks its big, brown eye and moves for the sofa, hypothesis be damned. There's nothing subtle about this one. Come to it with the power you find at the base of your spine. Formulate your own theories — you'll be right; you've got the rhythm.

An old favorite at Be Be K'Roche concerts is "Smile." I saw a four-year-old girl dance all over the floor to the length of it in sheer delight. She out-danced everyone in the room and collapsed in exhausted giggles, surrounded by clutching, sweating women, on the last chord. On the album, it's shorter and tighter. If you know a four-year-old, are one, or just remember what that felt like, wear out your sneakers.

* Stolen from a line from a poem by Goat Woman.

REVIEWS

ROBIN MORGAN

Weaving Visionary Tapestry

Lady of the Beasts by Robin Morgan, Random House, \$3.95

by Rogi Rubyfruit

Feminism has taken on a profoundly individualized meaning for me. No longer does it necessarily mean meetings every night of the week, or a datebook that is more full than my wallet. Feminism means survival: nurturance of my spirit in the presence of those who would destroy Her. And it means learning: giving my Spirit as much knowledge as I can, that She will bless me and teach others.

When I read *Lady of the Beasts* by Robin Morgan, I know I am not alone in being alone. Several years ago, I read Morgan's poem, "Monster," with a great deal of respect and support; I didn't understand it. I remember it being quite good by poetic standards: active metaphors, colorful description, unsentimental phrasing. Actually, only a handful of Lesbian poets write like that. She was a good poet; I was an ignorant audience. Experience creates the union.

If the reader of *Lady* has merely studied archetypal and mystical imagery, this book becomes an inarticulate abstraction of symbols. If the reader has experienced such symbolism, this book becomes a coherent and compelling documentation of personal process. By use of alienated and academic metaphors, reclaimed by Morgan as living tissue, the feminist press finally has a responsible example of one woman's need for, and frustration in, growing.

This is a Visionary work. Subtlety of expression and vivid description are the two most difficultly balanced qualities in any Artform. These Morgan has achieved; indeed, a book of such consistently high quality - to one, like me, who writes constantly - seems quite improbable.

There is no "best" poem in this book, though I am most strongly drawn to "Voices From Six Tapestries." Its consistency in interpretation of metaphysical symbolism is superb. It is also the only poem with a preface by Morgan, in which she offers a brief history of six tapestries, woven some five hundred years ago. Historians theorize that the tapestries were designed and executed by women. Morgan's research leads her to believe this is true, and also to believe that these works represent Wiccan Paganism in all their detail. Her study, alone, is fascinating. But her poem, itself six panels, is so beautiful that I do not wish to see the tapestries, for

fear they would appear merely colored cloth by comparison.

Interestingly, I did not read this poem in order. I began with Smell (the lion), read to the end of the work, then found the first two parts, and much later the prose preface. The segments of this poem are so thoroughly independent - yet so thoroughly intertwined - that I understood what I was hearing, out of order, and without the prefaced explanation. Now, that's good poetry. And the whole piece took two years to write.

Robin Morgan is a Poet's Poet. Seldom do I read the work of someone about whose life I knew so little, and leave feeling I know it so well. This is communication: to transpose the Visoin onto paper, send it three thousand miles, and have it regenerate intact in another woman's soul.

Lady of The Beasts, Trapped in Ivory Tower?

Lady of the Beasts, Robin Morgan, Random House, 1976.

by Joy Fisher

"When I first became consciously 'political' I felt it very important to deal solely, almost polemically, with externals as subject matter in my work - in order to avoid being an 'ivory-tower poet.' What is more important to me now is the unifying of the external *with* the internal, and even an increasing emphasis on the internal . . ."

- Robin Morgan, in "Adrienne Rich and Robin Morgan talk about poetry and women's culture," *The New Woman's Survival Sourcebook*.

When I think of all the hours of real labor, of anguish, of self-probing that must have gone into the writing of *Lady of the Beasts*, I shrink from placing a negative judgment on that new book of poetry by Robin Morgan.

But as my mind dodges for alternative phrases to approach a critique, it comes back, however reluctantly, to the conclusion that much of the poetry in this book is the product of utter burn-out.

Burn-out is expressed in many ways in the poetry. In some instances, it is apparent in the language of

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the poem itself, as, for example, this section from her long narrative poem, "The City of God":

I have utterly lost the energy they sing at me about.
My energy, my energy, how I give it to them in waves,
rays,

bursts, like sunlight. Hallelujah, how they bask in it.
The sun is dying, they forget, a star in some addict's
blind eye

rapidly burning itself out.

What should I fix up this time, and watch decay?

Occasionally, it is her choice of subject matter which speaks to me of burn-out. I get this feeling from the last section of the book, "Voices from Six Tapestries." In an introduction to this section, Morgan explains this long (23 pages) poem was two years in the writing, during which time she studied the 500 year old Cluny tapestries known as *The Lady with the Unicorn*.

Assertiveness training teaches us that we each have the right to set our own priorities, and I acknowledge that right to Robin Morgan. Nevertheless, my reaction to "Voices from Six Tapestries" is a back stiff from resentment at what seems surely to be a retreat to an ivory tower.

Not that the Cluny tapestries don't interest me in a sort of detached, intellectual way. But it is exactly that detached intellectualism that drives me crazy, especially when I see it in women's poetry. It's an emulation of an emotionally bankrupt male tradition in poetry, and I think it's dangerous, because it can fool us into thinking we "know" something because we understand it with our heads, when in fact we haven't grappled with it on a gut level at all.

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I don't think Morgan is emulating an emotionally bankrupt male tradition out of admiration. Sometimes, when you're burnt out, you just can't grapple any more, and so you retreat to something detached, neutral, cerebrally interesting.

In "The Network of the Imaginary Mother," by contrast, I was socked between the eyes by the final stanzas in each section of the poem. These stanzas list, in an understated way that balances the emotionally charged subject matter, women murdered as witches. This stanza, which closes the third section of the poem, is a good example:

Repeat the syllables

before the lesson hemorrhages through the brain:

Margaret Barclay, crushed to death with stones, 1618.

Mary Midgely, beaten to death, 1646.

Peronette, seated on a hot iron as torture

and then burned alive, 1462.

Sister Maria Renata Sanger, sub-prioress

*of the Premonstratensian Convent of Unter-Zell,
accused of being a lesbian;*

the document certifying her torture

is inscribed with the seal of the Jesuits,

and the words Ad Majorem Dei Gloriam —

To the Greater Glory of God.

What have they done to us.

Many of the poems in the book are long. Adrienne Rich accounts for this with the theory that as women's lives expand, our poems are getting bigger ("Adrienne Rich and Robin Morgan talk about poetry and women's culture," *The New Woman's Survival Sourcebook*.)


Whether that theory is accurate or not, I felt the best poems were the shorter ones. There are a cluster of these in section five of the book, "The Other Strand," dedicated to Jane Alpert. Among these are "Pedestrian Woman," "To a Widow," "Survival," and "A Ceremony," all written to and/or about women.

My favorite of all is "The Pedestrian Woman," which I heard Robin Morgan read some years ago in Los Angeles. I've been waiting for it to come out in print ever since, and, finally, here it is, in *Lady of the Beasts*.

DANCE

*There will be a dance
under veils of mist
there will be a dance
hidden in the fog
there will be a dance
women laughing
women loving
at the foot of many mountains
in the thick of many woods
there will be a dance
underneath the moon*

— Bodil Sivertsen



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Profile: Arlene Raven

afford to punish each other because they have certain privileges. I would rather that they use them to help each other. Often, I feel that the woman who is the most admired in the movement, is the woman with the least options. A woman with privilege is seen as suspect . . . and I've felt oppressed by that. I'm not willing to turn oppression in our culture into a virtue. I want to be as good as I can be and as powerful as I can be, as a feminist within feminist institutions, as well as an individual at large.

LEADERSHIP IS A PRECARIOUS ROLE

Striking such a high profile has often invited strife for Raven. "Within the movement, I've felt the oppression of being in yet another minority group . . . that of being a leader. Leadership, or strength is a 'male role' in the culture. It is a very precarious role. In a feminist situation, the less structure you put on that role, the more exchange you invite. There is more room for anger to emerge, roles to change, and barriers to dissolve. I've found that we, as women, tend to play female roles with our leaders. My experiences include women being alienated from me, thinking I am trying to take their power from them. Women have directed a great deal of anger toward me. It hurts my feelings when women put anger on me. Yet, I have experienced doing the same to others I saw as powerful leaders, and I know it to be a necessary part of the process of reclaiming our power."

Despite a heavy academic background, Raven has never been a cultural recidivist. She has consistently sought to fuse politics with culture. Her formal educational training frequently dovetailed the political activities of the sixties. Becoming involved as a feminist further personalized and integrated her profession, her politics and her life. "Asserting my identity as a lesbian was a way of announcing that integration." She says that now her identification comes out of her work and her ideas. As for her personal life . . . "Anyone who has been in CR has heard it all."

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PUSHING WHAT WOMEN HAVE TO OFFER

Raven is in the process of redefining her role at the Woman's Building. She has been heavily involved as an organizer and administrator throughout its inaugural years. But she feels that "you can only function as an organizer for a certain amount of time and then you've got to change. Now what I'm trying to do is participate *within* the institution. After spending three years defining what a public center for woman's culture is, and can be, I want to begin to



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DANCE: Sat. Nov. 13th. 8:30 pm. Entertainment, 9:00 pm sharp. \$2.00

Events above are sponsored by **WOMANENERGY** and will be held at The Women's Building, 1727 N. Spring St.

Profile: "Oppression Is No Virtue"

move out into the culture at large. I want to figure out how individuals can relate to the Building through their work. And I want to in turn figure out how we, as feminists can make more aggressive thrusts into the culture. This year I'm creating and participating in a program for second year FSW students which will attempt to do this."

In addition to her redefined role at the Woman's Building, Arlene is currently one of the editors of *Chrysalis*, a magazine of women's culture which will appear in January. She is ebullient about *Chrysalis*, which will be a magazine with national appeal, featuring resources, creative expression, theory, and an analysis of women's culture and world events from a radical feminist perspective.

The pluralist politics of *Chrysalis* are perhaps a reflection of Raven's vision of where feminists need to go in the future. "I think women have to be willing to form coalitions and have a unified movement." There has been a tremendous emphasis of differences. Now there has to be an emphasis on similarities and common goals that we have. Individual women, as well as groups, need to move aggressively into the culture. We have to start pushing more and more with what women have to offer. We have to

expose our work, whether it be art, therapy, writing, or politics. And we need to put it out very carefully. Often, I think of it as having to go into a guerilla situation . . . of having to do a lot of street fighting. We need to start turning ourselves outward and start making things happen in conjunction with major events in the culture . . . to illuminate what they are."

At the same time she feels that "we need not to lose sight of where we are now. We have to be sensitive to the present. We have to be aware of the world. The woman's movement of today has a different job then it had five years ago. Many women's organizations and institutions were made for that period. And if they are not flexible, they are going to crumble."

Undoubtedly, if that happens, it won't come as a surprise if Arlene Raven is found poking about in the dust, sifting and searching for ways to resurrect a fresher and more vigorous feminist future.

continued from page 5

LESBIAN BROTHEL — SOMETHING FOR EVERYONE!

sexuality to overcome it. Explored among ourselves, it may become something totally different. We don't know enough about our sexuality together. How much of our sexuality is a survival response under male oppression and supremacy? It may be that the exploration of our sexuality in the brothel will lead to an understanding that our sex needs have been programmed. Maybe we will begin to discover our own natural flow and abandon the male sex emphasis.

Paradoxically, the emphasis on sexuality in the lesbian brothel may have a reverse effect. By no longer repressing sex, we might find that it will not preoccupy us so much. Emphasis on sex in the lesbian community may reflect the present state of affairs.

Now we come to the relationship of money in all this. Understandably, we would try to eliminate it, possibly move to barter. In any case, the exchange of money will have a different significance at the brothel since it's reciprocal. Not for sex, for a sister. The exchange of money is more a donation than a purchase. A man purchases. We're freely giving.

Undoubtedly, some women will find all this very provocative. It may look like the lesbian brothel is reinforcing pornographic culture. But it may be necessary to experience this, to go through this, to get to the other side. ☸☸☸



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Pope Joan; A Pie In The Face of God The Father

know, I didn't think monks were supposed to be fathers either) and her mother was named either Judith or Ethelrude, and was or was not a goose girl to a baron.

Until she was about 18 Joan did the usual ninth-century A.D. young woman things, whatever they may have been. Then, here the stories concur, she met a traveling monk (I told you to watch those monks) whose name was Ulfilas, Frumentias, or something else. Faster than you can say *Pater Noster*, Joan and the monk had run off together to whisper sweet litanies in each other's ears.

HOME SWEET MONASTERY

Now a monk without a monastery is like many a woman without a vibrator, happy perhaps, but not satisfied. So Joan and her lover soon ended up in a monastery in Fulda, Germany. Joan, by this time, was in full drag and successfully passing for an unspoiled young monk. Fortunately for Joan, she had been something of a wonderchild, having learned science and philosophy from her father. With loose robes, a quick mind, and a droopy hood she managed to good work her way into the monastery. When a few of the other monks began to look at her a bit too closely, she and her lover hit the road again, ending up in Athens where they either studied, lived in a cave or lectured at an academy. From there it was only a hop, skip and a *Te Deum* to Rome, where in no time at all that nice young monk from Fulda had become a cardinal.

In 852 Pope Leo IV died and was succeeded on the chair of Peter by the aforementioned monk, our own Joan, still in drag and known now as Pope John VIII. She was the 105th pope, though the Church's official records skip her altogether and place her successor, Benedict III in the 105th spot. For a term of 2 years, 5, 4, or 1 month and 4 days (everyone agrees; in the 4 days) she did the usual popely things: built churches, ordained bishops and cardinals, issued bulls and oddly enough, considering the source, wrote 3 books condemning iconoclasts.

Spring of 854 found Rome having a little trouble with the locusts again. As locusts were wont to do in those days, they were swooping about in enormous numbers, devouring crops and procreating. Her Holiness had promised to work up her best anti-locust blessing and deliver it on Rogation Day following a huge procession from St. Peter's Basilica to Lateran Square. Pope John VIII mounted a mule

for the procession with some difficulty, as her papal robes were concealing a full term papal pregnancy.

CHRISTIAN GORE

There are several versions of the tragedy that befell the Holy Mother on that day, each replete with the customary Christian gore. One version has Joan going into labor and giving birth to a child who was immediately strangled by the outraged mob, while Joan herself was tied to her mule's tail and dragged to death. Mules not being noted for their fleetness of foot, however, this seems a bit implausible. But there are lots of other endings. Some say she died in childbirth on the procession route. Or, most likely of all, her sex and condition was somehow discovered en route to Lateran Square, and the crowd of enraged Christians surged forward with characteristic enthusiasm, beat the woman to death and buried her on the spot. Also characteristically, the Roman people then erected a statue of her holding babe in arms. And while the Church has spent the last thousand years denying Joan's papacy, it is rumored that the monk that got her pregnant is now a saint.

All accounts of Joan have her perishing one way or another on that fateful Rogation Day. But in one legend at least the baby is spared when an anonymous woman darted out of the crowd, bagged the child and ran. At any rate, to this day no papal procession has gone down THAT street again.

Joan was a woman a thousand years ahead of her time. She must have been aware of the irony of the position of leader of a religion that considered her sex to be little more than an occasion of sin. With her intelligence, passion for learning, craftiness and a fine set of men's clothing, she would be a hit in any contemporary dyke community. She would no doubt also be giving credit where credit is due — thanking the goddess for all her victories.

Bernadette Devlin

leading figure (I R A) in the Irish freedom fight will speak on "The State of Ireland" on Nov. 13, 1:00 p.m. at the Woman's Building. \$2.00/ \$1.00 unemployed. Call 221-6161 infor.

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A candidate opposing Lady Astor for a seat in Parliament argued that she was unqualified to represent a farming community. "Why," he scoffed, "I'll wager she doesn't even know how many toes a pig has."

"If the gentleman will remove his boots," said the unruffled Lady Aston, "the answer will be plain to everyone."

From Majority Report, August 1976 (Vol. VI, No. 7).

continued from page 33

Old Testament of Lesbian Courage

If the lack of translation reflected academic standards of the mid-fifties (when academic readers were assumed to be fluent in French and German), Dr. Foster transcended those standards in a delightfully surprising way in another part of the book: Chapter five, titled "Conjectural Retrospect," is devoted to biographical data about a dozen or so 19th century women writers who appeared to be (and many of whom have since been confirmed as having been) lesbian.

These writers include such well-known women as George Sand, Emily Bronte, Margaret Fuller and Emily Dickinson.

Such biographical delving was strictly taboo during the 1950's, during the reign of the "New Criticism," which taught that each work of literature should be understood from itself alone, without reference to the life or times of its author. Inclusion of the biographical material in this book, then, was a daring thing to do, and another indication of the courage of its author.

She has given us back role models as well as our literary history.

Dr. Foster, now in her eighties, lives in a nursing home in Arkansas. She has lived long enough to create a pioneering work in the field of lesbian literary history, to see that work almost disappear from public view, and finally, to see it restored by republication to its proper place in our history.

When you buy this book, you'll be buying more than a book; you'll be buying a tangible token of lesbian courage. And when you hold it in your hand you'll be holding an accomplishment to be proud of.

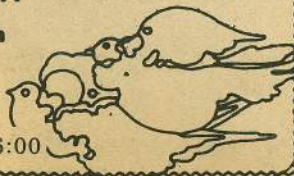
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POETRY by Barbara Ruth

Manifesto No. 5, Revolutionary Blues

*Now it's me
Suddenly, the target,
Being told
Watch it, girl,
You're stepping out of line.*

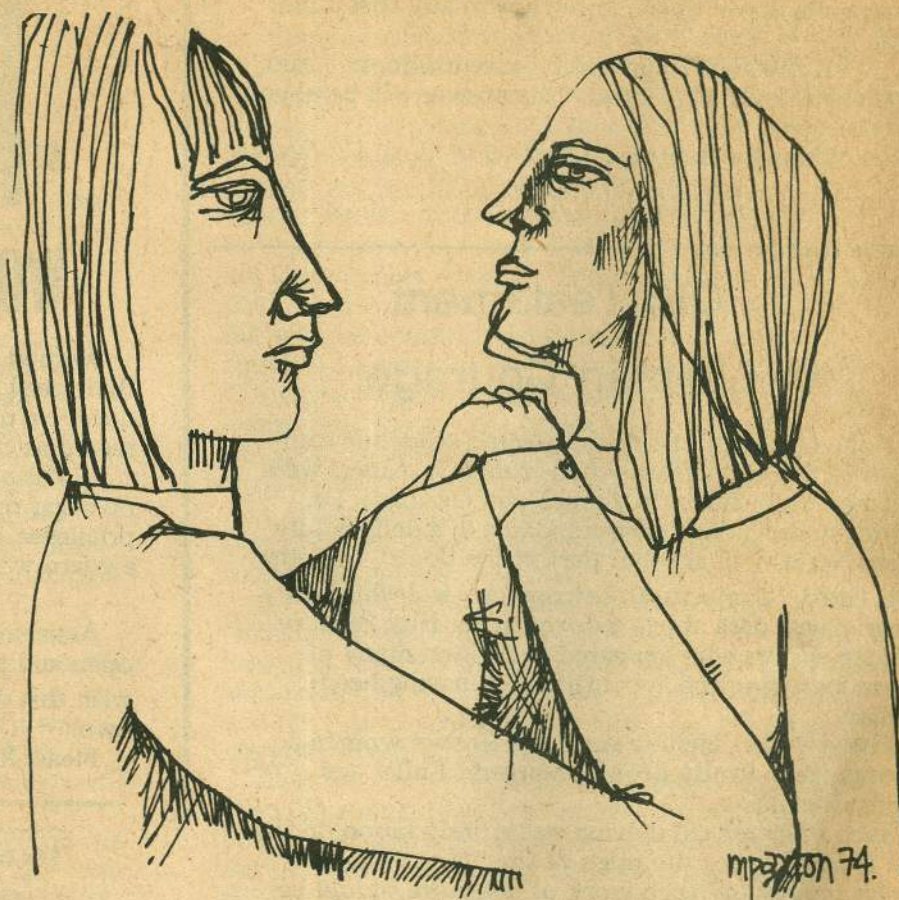
*It's not my sister or my lover
It's happening to
This time,
No, now it's my turn.*

*Sometimes I want to go away,
Want to hide
Want to get away
From everything.*

*But I know there is no turning
Back.*

*No pretending
That I have not seen
Have not become
The woman I am.*

*So, I stand my ground
Arm myself
With my love and rage
Prepare myself
For whatever is to be.*



Women in Transition

*The women who wrote the book on divorce
Are writing a book on marriage.
They're going to tell brides-to-be
How hard it is to get out
Before they've gotten themselves in.*

*The women who wrote the book on divorce
Say that if most women knew the truth
They would still decide to marry.*

*But maybe, they say,
The women would cling to something,
Would keep their own names
Or jobs
Or bank accounts.
Maybe, say*

*The women who wrote the book on divorce,
If women knew the truth about marriage before the fact
They would hang on to the fringe benefits
While signing away their lives.*

After the Revolution

*After the revolution
We will make such music as has not
Been heard upon this earth.
We will begin
To love each other
In ways we cannot now
Even imagine.
After the revolution
We will learn to remember our dreams.*

DYKETACTICS Spreading the Word

*We travel to other cities
Replete with newspaper
Clippings and stories.
We come to tell the women
That dykes can rise up together
Beautiful
In our lesbian anger
Beautiful and strong.
We travel to other cities
Telling the good news
We give our sisters the contact high
Of success stories
Brave victories
Epiphenies, exultations
Spreading the word, sisters, spreading the word.*

— Barbara Ruth

(About the author: Ms. Ruth is a member of the
Philadelphia based lesbian feminist DYKETACTICS!)